



Tourism Development and Marketing Plan
Borrego Springs, California

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NOTE:

This is a three year Tourism Development and Marketing Plan. Every recommendation detailed within this plan should be implemented and completed by the end of 2004. During the summer of 2004, the community should seek grant funding to develop the next phase of the development plan, which would include increased marketing, public relations, advertising, as well as the implementation of the town center master plan, and new tourism-oriented projects and events.

Chandler, Brooks & Donahoe, Inc. (CB&D) has been retained by San Diego County to assist the community of Borrego Springs in developing a Tourism Development Plan – the community’s primary industry. The County Office of Trade and Business Development was awarded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to administer and fund this Plan.

The goal of the Plan is to provide a list of recommendations that will help foster economic prosperity through enhancement of the tourism industry.

To develop the plan, CB&D has interviewed dozens of individuals and businesses locally, and has met with local organizations including the Borrego Springs Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, it’s subcommittee, the Vitalization Group, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, local Realtors, various citrus growers, the Borrego Water District, school district, medical facility, etc.

We have also reviewed the following information provided by the Vitalization Subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce:

- Description of the community
- Profile of the people of Borrego Springs
- Description of existing lands use and development patterns
- Inventory of resources

The Development Plan concentrates its efforts in two primary areas:

First, the development of a marketing plan that will promote the area and will assist in extending the relatively short visitor season. The marketing plan includes an analysis and recommendations including:

- Advertising and public relations efforts
- Cross marketing efforts
- Creation of effective marketing materials
- Creation and fostering of marketing partnerships

Secondly, to provide a list of recommendations that will assist the community in further developing the tourism industry. These recommendations cover a variety of topics including:

- Wayfinding and signage
- Further development of a town center
- Economic development recruitment
- Funding, timelines and management of the program

In a nutshell, the Chamber and other local groups, have developed strategies, goals and objectives which, in this plan, are converted to actual “action steps:” a to-do list that will help achieve those objectives.

You will find this plan concise and to the point, and we have chosen not to add the substantial amount of data and research information we've gathered, that typically "bulk up" a plan such as this. The purpose of this plan is to provide step-by-step instructions along with timelines and possible funding sources.

Background

History & background of the area



The following section was provided by volunteers of the Borrego Springs Vitalization Group. It includes the history of the community, its location, quality of life information, and a note about the environmental setting in which the community is located.

Note: The following section was provided by Vitalization Group volunteers.

Location

Borrego Springs is a low-desert community (780 foot elevation) located in a sweeping valley at the northeast corner of San Diego County, east of the Coastal Range mountains, approximately 85 miles from the San Diego International Airport, and approximately 70 miles south of the Palm Springs area.

Borrego Springs is an hour to two-hour drive from a number of communities including Ramona, Indio/Palm Desert, Brawley, Temecula, and Escondido and about a three-hour drive, depending on traffic, from Los Angeles and Orange County. The nearest stoplight is 50 miles away in Ramona.

Borrego Springs is surrounded by the 650,000-acre Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, one of the largest state parks in the United States and the largest in California.

There are several highway routes to Borrego Springs as follows:

1) S-22 from the west

The “Montezuma Grade,” referred to as “The Glass Elevator Highway” when it opened in the 1960’s, is the primary western entrance. Its descent to the valley floor is steep and winding, but is still the most direct way to the town from north San Diego County, Orange and Los Angeles counties.

2) S-3 from SR-78 to the south

“Yaqui Pass” (pronounced Yah-key) travels from Tamarisk Grove campground on SR-78 past Rams Hill Country Club and La Casa del Zorro Resort, both located approximately six miles east of “town.” This is the primary access road for visitors coming from the San Diego area through the very popular village of Julian.

3) Borrego Springs Road from SR-78

Through the “Texas Dip,” this is the access highway from the southeast towns of Brawley and El Centro.

4) S-22, the Borrego-Salton Seaway from the east and SR-86

Designated a AAA scenic highway, the State recently finished a direct connector from Interstate 10 (Palm Springs area) to the lower portion of SR-86. State Route 86 travels south of the Palm Springs area approximately 40 miles (Highways 10 and 86 are four lane freeways), connecting to S-22 at Salton City, 28 miles east of Borrego Springs. This is an easy drive, comparatively, to the other direct routes from the San Diego area.

Poor access has always been a two-edged sword for Borrego Springs. It helps in maintaining the slow-paced, rural nature of the town but, on the flip side, also restricts growth

and development in the valley.

History

As early as 1936, A. A. Burnand Jr., envisioned the Borrego Valley as a resort community and by 1946, developers were busily implementing plans to turn the valley into a winter resort. A few short years later, through the efforts of Burnand and other developers, Borrego Springs had positioned itself to become another Palm Springs. Aggressive marketing programs brought celebrities and developers to the valley and Borrego Springs' future looked very bright.

Because of its location within the boundaries of the largest contiguous state park in the nation, Borrego Springs struggled in its early days with accessibility issues. There were dreams of roads along the old Truckhaven Trail to the Salton Sea, a road through Montezuma Valley to Warner Springs, and even a highway through Coyote Canyon. To appease conservationists, the plan for the Coyote Canyon road was abandoned, but the other two roads were ultimately built (S-22 and S-2).

In the 1950s the De Anza Desert Country Club, consisting of a golf course and 300 home sites, was constructed. The Borrego Air Ranch and a central mall with adjoining condominiums were constructed in the 1960s. Because of Borrego Springs remote location and accessibility, development leveled off and Borrego Springs never became the desert destination envisioned by the community's early "pioneers" and leaders.

In 1963 an economic survey commissioned by the La Casa del Zorro resort correctly concluded that the surrounding park, while adding quality, would limit development of the community. Despite the recent additions of Rams Hill and Borrego Springs Country Club, Borrego Springs has remained essentially a quiet community with population increases in the 1-2% range annually.

Source: Anza-Borrego A to Z: People, Places and Things, Lindsay, Diana, Sunbelt Publications, 2001, pp. 82-84.

Quality of Life

While "quality of life" is certainly a subjective topic, many of Borrego Springs' permanent residents would say it is the quiet, remote, small town atmosphere that most appeals to them. This atmosphere is primarily attributable to the surrounding Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Positioned totally within park boundaries, Borrego Springs is a unique community unlike any other in the U.S. The surrounding 650,000 acre park lends a tranquil, peaceful and stunningly scenic backdrop to the community. During the peak visitor "season," from November through April, the local community population can swell to more than 7,000 including second-home residents and visitors.

The park itself is one of the largest contiguous state parks in the United States and annually attracts nearly a million visitors. It is a major California attraction for those interested in nature-based tourism activities: Visitors come to camp, hike, study desert ecology, bike ride, gaze at the stars, or just get away from the hustle and bustle of a faster-paced life.

Without tourism, the primary industry in Borrego Springs, the area would be a much different community. It is the only resource-center within an hour's drive providing essential services including grocery stores, a pharmacy, gas stations, and retail shopping opportunities. The nearest larger community, Ramona, is an hour's drive away, and the Palm Springs area, the easiest drive from Borrego Springs, is an hour and a half away. Without tourism, most of the businesses in Borrego Springs would not be able to survive, and without services to even support the full-time population, the community would struggle, as a whole, to survive.

There are three major resorts in the Borrego Springs valley plus a number of other accommodation facilities available to visitors ranging from rustic RV parks to four-star. There are fewer than 400 total rooms available to visitors.

Borrego Springs has also attracted a growing artists' community. The Chamber of Commerce serves as the primary information center and tourism bureau for inquiries about the area from visitors.

Some of the challenges to quality of life, faced by residents and visitors alike, include restricted medical services, limited shopping opportunities, and the intense summer heat that nearly shuts down the town during the summer months. Borrego Springs definitely exhibits an annual "boom and bust" cycle due to seasonal tourism.

When the desert has a good wildflower bloom, tourists flood into town. In exceptionally good wildflower years, the town is not equipped to handle the large influx of visitors that peaked during one year at 15,000 in a single weekend. Porta-potties dot the landscape and restaurants literally run out of food. Additionally, the local labor pool is inadequate in both quantity and quality. Seasonal employees are difficult to attract and there is a shortage of affordable housing for them once they arrive.

During poor wildflower blooms, the town's businesses struggle to survive – even during the winter and early spring months and during the typically hot summers - the "bust" part of the year - one can wait minutes before a single car drives down the main street. Restaurants, retailers, and even some lodging facilities, close for months during the summer, challenging the "locals" to remember the hours of those that remain open on limited schedules.

Environmental Setting

Borrego Springs is surrounded by the incredibly beautiful Anza-Borrego Desert State Park where the climate is considered “low desert.” Rainfall is scarce (less than 5” per year) and summer temperatures can reach 120° or more. The winter months, by comparison, are mild. Desert wildflowers, which attract many tourists, bloom between November and March when there is a combination of sufficient rainfall and adequate temperatures. The bloom usually occurs from mid-February to mid- April depending solely on weather conditions.

Situation

Situation analysis



This section of the plan was also prepared by the Borrego Springs Vitalization Group and includes a summary overview of current issues in Borrego Springs that the consultant team would need to be aware of in creating this Tourism Development and Marketing Plan.

It includes information regarding population and growth, constraints to development, land uses and development patterns, housing trends, and a summary of local business and employment. Census and other demographic data was provided by the Vitalization Group, but not included in the actual report.

Borrego Springs is one of the more unique communities in the U.S. in many aspects:

1. It may be the only community that is totally surrounded by a major state or national park.
2. It is located in a county known for its seaside setting (San Diego) and not known for any desert locales.
3. The community is located at least 30 miles, in any direction, from a state highway.
4. Its nearest neighboring town or city is 50 miles away.

This “uniqueness” makes Borrego Springs very “isolated,” which is a double edged sword in many aspects. The isolation is one of the biggest draws for local residents who do not wish to live in larger, and more expensive, desert locations such as Palm Springs, and its isolation is even a draw for many seasonal residents (Snowbirds) and even for visitors.

On the other hand, the year round population in Borrego Springs is not sufficient to support additional medical services, additional retail, activities, entertainment, and services. To many, this is good news, to many it’s a major shortcoming of the community.

One thing residents can rest assured of: Borrego Springs will never be another Palm Springs, for all the reasons listed above.

Borrego Springs, if it were built out, could accommodate (in land mass) a maximum of 35,000 residences, as opposed to the more than 260,000 living in the Palm Springs region. The fact is that Borrego Springs will, most likely, never be a city of more than 15,000 residents. At that size, the community would have the benefit of warranting additional medical facilities, a fully-stocked and competitive grocery store, and other services that residents now need to travel more than 50 miles to receive.

The focus of this Plan is to develop ways that Borrego Springs can further its tourism industry, and not to determine how big the community should get or what that means in terms of its future. However, some of these recommendations are made based on future growth of the community, which for our purposes, would be no more than 10,000 to 15,000 residents (full and part time). Please remember, that reaching these population figures may not happen even within the next 60 years. At the current growth rate of one to two percent a year, it would take 15 years for the population to reach 4,000 full-time residents. These issues will be addressed in the “2020” plan now being developed by the county with input from the community.

Constraints to Development

There are several constraints on growth in Borrego Springs. Among them are:

- 1) Limited access
- 2) Limited source of water
- 3) Highly seasonal tourism industry
- 4) Insufficient medical services
- 5) Divided community attitudes
- 6) Permitting times and costs

While Borrego Springs is less than a three-hour drive from a population base of more than 15 million people, due to the lack of any direct easy access, it is deemed as “isolated” from the coastal communities. The drive from San Diego, while incredibly beautiful, is difficult, with slow, winding and steep two-lane county roads which can be quite dangerous at times. While the drive is part of the attraction in visiting Borrego Springs, it can be a deterrent to those who might see it as an obstacle in relocating to the valley.

Limited water is an increasing concern in the valley. Borrego’s water comes from an aquifer under the valley. Currently, agriculture uses approximately 70% of all the water pumped from the Borrego aquifer, golf courses use about 15%, and domestic use accounts for the remaining 15%. Coincidentally, the overdraft of the valley’s aquifer is approximately equal to the amount pumped by agriculture. Thus, there is much controversy locally concerning agriculture in the valley, where there are no viable, affordable alternative sources of water. The Borrego Water District is in the process of putting a groundwater management plan into action which may address some of these issues.

Tourism is highly seasonal in Borrego Springs due to the extreme heat during the summer months. Businesses must plan for the short tourist season: approximately five to six months when businesses can make a profit. During this period, most retailers must make enough money to cover the losses during the rest of the year. Many simply close during the summer months, compounding the problem even further: visitors do visit Borrego Springs year round, but the lack of dining and retail drives them from the community sooner than during other times of the year. Recent increases in power costs have exacerbated the problem: energy costs are highest when income is the lowest.

Lack of stable employment throughout the year severely limits both the quantity and quality of the Borrego labor pool. Without an adequate labor pool, it is difficult for local business people to adequately staff their businesses during the busy times. Because of this, there are a limited number of retail outlets in town, which restricts the shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities for visitors. Only workers that can live on unemployment during the off-season are available. Due to the lack of rental housing in Borrego, it is not currently feasible for most businesses to import workers during the season.

Lack of medical services is a “Catch-22” situation. Adequate medical services are not present due to the inability of a small community to financially support them. Many people, particularly active retirees, do not relocate to Borrego Springs due to insufficient medical services. Older Borregans find that as their health fails they are required to move closer to the medical care they need. There is no 24-hour emergency care facility in the valley. Currently, the Borrego Springs Fire Department is in the process of adding paramedics to the staff. This is a big step toward providing quality emergency medical care in the valley.

Fund raising events and the generosity of wealthier residents (both seasonal and locals) has helped fund the medical center and established an endowment. Borrego has been blessed with some very generous residents who love this valley and wish it to continue to be the get-away-from-it-all, resort community to which they can escape.

Description of Existing Land Use and Development Patterns

Borrego Springs, as a “gateway community” is surrounded on all sides by Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and, as a result, cannot be expanded beyond its current boundaries.

Commercial. Commercial development occurs in two disjointed areas. The main commercial area is centered along Palm Canyon Drive that extends east and west from the Christmas Circle roundabout. The second commercial area includes the resort La Casa del Zorro, located at the south end of the valley approximately five miles from the main commercial area.

For approximately three miles along either side of Palm Canyon Drive and adjacent roads, the properties are zoned for general and commercial use. The developed general commercial property in the central area constitutes less than 100 acres and includes the Palm Canyon Resort. The service commercial area along Stirrup Road constitutes approximately 25 acres but much of the property is unoccupied or used by public agencies including the water and fire districts. The remainder is privately owned.

Commercially-zoned property is valued at approximately \$25,000 to \$35,000 per acre with the largest single parcel of 10 acres currently for sale at \$35,000 an acre.

Industrial. There is a limited amount of land zoned for industrial development adjacent to the airport but at this time there is only a cement plant.

Residential. Two large planned communities have been zoned for 1,400 homes each: Rams Hill Country Club and Borrego Springs Country Club. Each is about 20% developed. Rams Hill Country Club (approximately 6 miles from downtown Borrego Springs) has a new owner as of June 14, 2001. This development is zoned for 1,400 homes of which about 20% are built. An 18-hole championship golf course was in-

cluded in the sale. It is hoped this sale will spark new residential construction in Borrego.

Agriculture. There is currently about 4,000 acres of agricultural development in the valley. Agri-businesses headquartered outside the valley own 85% of the agricultural land with local residents owning the remaining 15%. Currently almost 25% of the land is used for potatoes and 50% for lemons and grapefruit that are not currently profitable due to competition from South American produce. This type of agriculture is very sensitive to any adverse economic conditions and frequently results in abandonment of the operations. The remainder of the acreage is used by nurseries that grow ornamental palms sold for use outside the valley.

Housing Trends and Densities

According to the recent census, the year round population of Borrego Springs approaches 3,000 and expands to 7,000 during our season—October to mid-April.

An indication of increased construction is the number of water meter applications. In past years, the Borrego Water District would average 12 applications a year. In one month in 2001, 12 applications were submitted!

Most of the homes being built in Borrego Springs at this time are upper end custom homes for seasonal homeowners. Density primarily ranges up to 1-acre lots for single family dwellings. In some areas, lots are ranging from 2.5 to 10 acres.

The housing supply is low at this time. There is a demand for low cost housing.

Business and Employment

The largest employer in Borrego Springs is the resort La Casa del Zorro that employs approximately 200 during the peak tourist season. Borrego Springs Unified School District employs 80 and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park employs 41.3 people during the peak season.

There is a shortage of college-educated people for the limited management level jobs available. For example, the school district, fire district and water district must generally seek employees with specific qualifications from outside the region, or they have to invest limited resources to train them. Once employed and experienced, these employees seldom stay for a long term. They transfer or seek employment in areas with more opportunities or a more comfortable climate.

There is a critical shortage of workers during the peak season. La Casa del Zorro imports workers through a hotel employment/training service that brings employees from other countries, supplying up to one-third of their seasonal staff. To meet the shortage, and make ends meet, some employees have two or even three jobs.

Recommendations

Executive summary



Borrego Springs and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are, and should be, national treasures: the park as one of the few remaining blooming deserts in the world and, Borrego Springs as one of the only communities – anywhere - surrounded entirely by a state or national park. The Borrego Springs valley is incredibly unique and beautiful every month of the year – something often forgotten by full-time residents.

Local residents and property owners are in Borrego Springs, for the most part, because of its solitude, its remoteness, its rural charm, and its beauty. Because of this, every recommendation made in this plan is tailored to keeping Borrego Springs beautiful and attractive, with commercial development restrictions in both developable area and architectural standards.

The purpose of this plan is to:

1. Attract visitors to Borrego Springs for extended stays
2. Expand the currently short visitor seasons
3. Provide a climate for increased development of visitor amenities and attractions that will benefit the full-time population, seasonal residents, as well as visitors to the valley

In order to make Borrego Springs a more successful tourism destination, it will need to step up its marketing effort in terms of quality and distribution (much of which is already underway), making it easier for visitors to find and get to Borrego Springs, and must make it easier to get around in Borrego Springs, once in the valley.

The economic benefit of tourism comes when visitors spend money in the community, and the most popular visitor activity across the country is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting. Therefore, having an attractive, pedestrian-friendly central shopping core area is important. We will spend a great deal of time in this plan emphasizing the “re-creation” of the community’s shopping district.

The primary industry in Borrego Springs is tourism - and it is likely to stay that way. With an economy heavily dependent on tourism, developing recommendations that result in visitor spending is critical. This in turn, will allow local merchants increased opportunities for success, will encourage development and investment in the town center, and will encourage more people to move to Borrego Springs because their needs will be served locally.

Based on this foundation, the following Tourism Development/Marketing Plan concentrates on five primary areas:

1. Marketing and distribution
2. Getting to Borrego Springs
3. Getting around in Borrego Springs

4. Offering things for visitors to see and do
5. Creating a “town center”

Marketing

Borrego Springs, considering its tremendous tourism potential, is under-marketed, primarily due to several factors:

- Budget restraints and the
- Lack of a cohesive effort
- Local attitude towards “why would anyone come here in the summer?” and “we already have too many visitors during the peak season.”

Borrego Springs has tremendous potential of becoming a year round destination. There are visitors in Palm Springs, Phoenix, Scottsdale, and other desert locations in July and August. Yes, it’s their “shoulder season,” but the successful communities don’t have “off seasons.” The clientele that will visit Borrego Springs in the summer is a totally different crowd than those who visit between November and April, and they come for different reasons. The marketing effort will have two distinct efforts, targeting different audiences.

It is important to point out that the community has already made major strides in its marketing efforts. A new logo has been developed, is in use, and does an excellent job of portraying Borrego Springs. A new rack card has been developed and is being widely distributed throughout the region. The Chamber of Commerce website is currently being redesigned and is a tremendous improvement over previous efforts. An initial marketing plan has been developed, which this Plan will only enhance. While we make numerous marketing recommendations throughout this Plan, we have been pleased by the recent efforts which create the “foundation” for a successful marketing effort.

Recommendations overview

We recommend that a 20 page, full-color, photography rich Activities Guide be created – a 4” x 9” booklet – that would include a variety of things to do and see in Borrego Springs such as (but not limited to):

- An overview of the state park
- The community theater
- The Park Visitors Center
- Palm Canyon Trail & other hiking trails
- Fonts Point
- Shopping & dining overview
- Golf and tennis in the valley
- Resorts and accommodations overview
- Agricultural tours
- Events
- Guided desert tours

- Highlights of each season: the differences
- Day trips from Borrego Springs (Julian, Montezuma Grade, Peg Leg monument, etc.)
- An overview of the climate by season
- Maps and contact information
- Anza Borrego Natural History Center
- Galleries and the arts

...as well as other information that will convince potential visitors that Borrego Springs has enough to offer to warrant a multi-day stay. The Activities Guide would also highlight the benefits of a summer visit – a totally different experience, than during the peak winter and spring months.

The Guide would replace the existing brochure but would not replace the rack card. We recommend that rack card be redesigned as a “teaser” or “lure” designed to get people to request the Activities Guide through an on-line form (part of the website) or by calling the toll-free visitor information line. The card would continue be distributed throughout the Southwest and expanded into northern and foreign markets where a summer desert experience is highly sought after. Distribution of marketing materials, due to budget restraints, has been a major shortcoming of the current effort. An effective distribution program will require more than 120,000 copies of the rack card each year and 70,000 Activities Guides.

We also recommend that a full-color map be developed that would include the routes to and information about the valley, and would highlight key assets and attractions available. It would detail agricultural tour routes, interpretive areas and pull-offs (more about this later), location of resorts and lodging facilities, dining and shopping, the State Park, public-play golf courses, etc.

The Chamber’s website is in the process of a major upgrade and we recommend it include video footage (from the terrific Anza-Borrego CD already produced and available), maps, directions and distances, and the Activities Guide in its entirety – including a downloadable PDF file of the Guide. The website should also include a request for information form to simplify the process of getting information about Borrego Springs.

Other marketing recommendations (detailed in the Recommendations section of the Plan) include placing an outdoor display case and other information at the Chamber of Commerce office so it’s working for the community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, interpretive signage placed at key spots throughout the valley, a visitor information kiosk in Christmas Circle, and better signage throughout the valley.

A concentrated, aggressive, public relations campaign should be a major part and major focus of the marketing effort, and will require time more than cash. The marketing plan

also includes development of a photo library and press kit.

Partnerships will also be very important to the marketing effort - particularly between the Chamber, the Park, and Natural History Association. The community will be far more effective as one loud voice as opposed to dozens of individual small voices – everyone doing their own thing. Public/Private partnerships should be created: For instance, resorts should be able to purchase a page in the Activities Guide to showcase what they have to offer. The page would not look like an ad, and would fit a predetermined format so it blends in as part of the Guide as informational, yet will help market their facilities and activities.

Getting to Borrego Springs

Signage getting to Borrego Springs is virtually nonexistent, yet there is ample signage directing visitors to smaller communities such as Julian. On State Highway 86 at Salton Sea, there is signage (just prior to the turn) directing visitors to Borrego Springs, 28 miles away on S-22. While this is fine for visitors coming from the Palm Springs area, however visitors coming from the San Diego area will find little or no signage for the state park or the community. Coming through Julian, the first sign even mentioning the State Park or Borrego Springs is located 12 miles east of Julian. This is tragic in terms of promoting the park or the community and a major effort should begin to convince CalTrans that this signage is critical to the success of the community.

With the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park as a major attraction in Southern California, we recommend that CalTrans add directional signage along state routes to the park and/or Borrego Springs. Additionally, on county roads (S-2 and S-22) there should be distance signage placed at key intersections letting visitors know they are still en route to the park and Borrego Springs.

Getting around Borrego Springs

The Borrego Springs community is huge in terms of geographic size, and its attractions and resorts are spread out all over the valley. In addition, the community is one of the most poorly signed communities in the country, as far as directional signage is concerned. For visitors coming into the valley from the west on S-22 (Montezuma Grade), there is barely sufficient signage, but coming into Borrego Springs from any of the three other directions will lead visitors to wondering where Borrego Springs is. From these directions there is little if ANY signage at all pointing visitors to the State Park or to key attractions and amenities.

On the flip side, the community has a plethora of billboard/sales signage everywhere – almost all of them off-premise signs. These signs paint a very poor image of the community and the projects they are trying to promote. On first impression, visitors are led to believe that there are no sign codes, no themes, no continuity, and the look detracts from

the natural beauty of the valley. The signs do not fit the landscape, most are aging and ugly, and create more of an “urban” feel than that of a scenic, quiet, desert community. Many of the original development “pioneers” saw Borrego Springs as the next Palm Springs – something the community will never be, and perhaps their ultimate downfall. The sale in Borrego Springs revolves around its remoteness, its quietness, its rural atmosphere, and these signs promote the wrong image of what they have to sell.

It is important to point out, however, that you really can’t blame the developers for adding these signs: without them very little could be found in the valley.

To rectify this problem, we recommend that a public/private initiative be developed that will replace ALL off-premise signs, with nicely designed directional signs that would include specific privately-owned major resorts and residential areas with publicly available amenities, such as golf. The signs would, of course also provide directions to the Park, town center, and other attractions and amenities around the valley. The net result would reduce the overall number of signs to less than half, while providing an attractive setting, and much improved “wayfinding” throughout the valley.

Town center recommendations

One of the biggest challenges for Borrego Springs revolves around the need for a more clearly defined and more attractive “town center.” We recommend that Christmas Circle be referred to, if not renamed, as “Town Plaza” so that visitors will realize that there is, in fact, a town – and a pedestrian plaza (the circle). Christmas Circle means nothing to first-time visitors, and most local residents do not know how Christmas Circle came to be. In our initial research we found no less than seven explanations of the naming of the circle.

We recommend that the “downtown district” only encompass the commercial area along Palm Canyon Drive from the Chamber of Commerce office (Stirrup) to just west of the Mall (Ocotillo). This three-quarter of a mile section should be the ONLY commercial retail district in Borrego Springs. This will reduce fears of the town becoming “another Palm Springs” and will assist in the development of the area as a high-density, pedestrian-oriented retail area. The downtown district should have predetermined design review guidelines that would limit building heights to no more than two stories, should include architectural guidelines (design review) in a Southwest or Santa Fe style, and should include strict signage ordinances, landscape setbacks, wide sidewalks and pedestrian paths, rear-facing parking, and even perhaps limits on retail store size in shops immediately in the vicinity of the circle itself. The design review process would only apply to new construction, although it would be nice to see existing building adopt the theme.

We also recommend that each of the two driving lanes along Palm Canyon Drive be narrowed down to 14 feet wide (like the rest of the roads and highways in the valley

which are 13'6" wide), include a center landscaped median, sidewalks widened from four feet to 12', and all parking be changed from a mixture of angle-in and parallel parking to just parallel parking.

Currently, this is the widest roadway in the entire valley and speed limits through the heart of town are 35 miles an hour (west of the Circle), 45 miles an hour east of the Circle, and 35 miles an hour around the circle. The speed limit should be reduced to 25 miles an hour throughout the 3/4 mile stretch.

Finally, Christmas Circle should be extended out another 14 feet, which will reduce the traffic to a single lane around the circle. The extension could be developed as a 12' sidewalk around the circle (perfect for art shows, markets and other activities, and easier walking), with a two or three foot lawn buffer between the sidewalk and street. Likewise, around the perimeter of the circle – the opposite side of the street – sidewalks (when developed) should be widened from four feet to 12 feet. This would still provide a very wide single lane (for trucks and large vehicles) around the circle, will slow traffic down, and will provide for a much more pedestrian atmosphere, and safer vehicle access.

This type of “traffic calming” will result in much more successful retail trade along the corridor, and that will spur additional investment by land owners and retailers. There are dozens and dozens of case histories around the U.S. (and especially in Europe), where communities have narrowed the streets, slowed traffic, resulting in highly successful retail businesses, and pedestrian-oriented activities. These recommendations will not impede delivery trucks, large motorhomes and other vehicles who already navigate narrow streets and tighter curves just a mile or two away on Montezuma Grade.

The downtown area recommendations will be the most expensive and perhaps the toughest of the recommendations made in this plan to implement in terms of funding and in terms of community consent. Therefore, we recommend that the Borrego Springs Vitalization Group concentrate its efforts on this area of the valley instead of attempting to address all issues throughout Borrego Springs.

Implementation & Funding

The development and implementation of all the recommendations made in this plan will total approximately \$3.5 million, of which a good portion could be paid for through available state and federal grant programs.

Approximately \$150,000 would be dedicated to the creation and implementation of a regional marketing program (encompassing nine states). Most of the initial expense is used for one-time capital costs, followed by a dedicated marketing and public relations program of approximately \$100,000 per year. We recommend that this program be paid for from TOT (Lodging Tax) funds and a mix of locally generated funding.

Executive summary

Approximately \$190,000 will be needed to implement a valley-wide directional signage program. The signage program would be developed as a public/private partnership project, with approximately 50% of the funding coming from Borrego Springs businesses, and a 50% match coming from the County in the form of one-time TOT investments over two years. The removal of existing off-premise signage would be facilitated totally by the businesses that own those signs and by local volunteers.

The biggest ticket item is the “vitalization” of the town center, which we’ve estimated to cost approximately \$3.1 million. This project includes narrowing the streets, adding center landscaped medians, wider sidewalks, additional beautification, etc. This project would be a long-term project, perhaps taking as much as ten years to complete - unless funding became available through grants, local investment, or other programs that could accelerate the process.

The effort will require:

- Creation of public/private signage partnerships
- RFQ/RFP assistance for signage, streetscape, and marketing assistance
- Permitting for all signage and public right-of-way improvements
- Grant writing
- Presentations and reporting to the County Board of Supervisors
- Working with and coordinating Borrego Springs volunteers and local efforts
- Locating matching-fund grants, and other financing vehicles
- Enforcement of an off-premise signage abatement program
- Developing and managing consultant/construction contracts, including fund and expenditure management

Funding

In the 1998-99 fiscal year, nearly \$140,000 in Borrego Springs projects was funded from Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT). This year (2001-02, \$190,500 was requested and \$96,000 awarded. Of the nearly \$460,000 in TOT revenues generated in Borrego Springs, we recommend that \$150,000 (32%) be allocated for two years to cover these “start-up” marketing and signage costs, after which the county would reassess the amount of ongoing TOT funding for marketing purposes. This request includes the current funding/grants provided by the county. We are recommending that the community tighten its belt with TOT expenditures so that these recommendations become the priority over the next three years. In a nutshell, the community (not including the State Park) received \$85,000 in TOT funding for the 2001-2002 year, and that would increase (if granted) to a total of \$150,000 for the 2002-2003 year, and for each of the following two years, by which time these recommendations would have been implemented. Once again, this \$150,000 is not in addition to current funding, but incorporates that funding, increasing it by just \$65,000 each of the next two years.

The streetscape recommendations would not be funded through TOT grants.

We firmly believe that this “investment” will provide the county with an excellent return on its investment in this community. TOT revenues should show increases of 10% or greater in the second and third years, which would add more than \$45,000 to the receipts each year.

A final word

It is a shame that local residents, particularly the business community, have “written off” the summer months and carry the attitude of “no one wants to come here during the summer. We don’t even want to be here.”

Even during the summer months, we visited with dozens of visitors in Borrego Springs who were disappointed that there were few restaurants open, little in the way of shopping, and few activities available. The top activity enjoyed by visitors is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting – yet Borrego Springs offers little during the summer months.

With a much improved, better funded, and concentrated marketing and public relations effort, and a secondary effort geared to attracting summer visitors, it is our hope that businesses, beginning in 2003, would extend the season for two weeks before and two weeks after the season. If the retail season begins in mid-October and runs through May, we hope retailers would open October first, and close (if they feel they must) on June 15th. It will take a couple of years to realize the benefit, but over this period, visitors will get to know that businesses will be open and they will be much more likely to visit during these periods.

Additionally, many businesses simply hang “closed” signs on their shops or resort leaving visitors to wonder whether they are permanently closed (gone out of business), or just closed for a week, or for the season. All signs should state “closed for the summer, re-opening mid-October.” We spoke with numerous visitors who planned to come back but had no idea when it was a good time to return – when would people be open? September? October? December? They felt pretty sure December through March would be fine, but were generally unsure whether or not October would be a good month – or even May. This uncertainty restricts the season even further, compounding the problem which could be partially remedied by inexpensive door signs.

Recommendations

Marketing and public relations



While Borrego Springs has tremendous tourism potential – even on a year round basis – its marketing program needs to be expanded and improved. Initial efforts are already underway but additional funding will be necessary to develop initial “start-up” and one-time marketing development costs.

Recommendation #1: Use the current logo

We recommend that the logo now in use for the Chamber of Commerce, be the logo used to promote Borrego Springs. We also recommend the logo (without the words “Chamber of Commerce”) be available for use by other not-for-profit organizations or local businesses who are also trying to promote Borrego Springs. It would be used only when identifying the community, and should not be used for businesses or as the logo for other organizations. For instance, if a resort were to promote an event in Borrego Springs, it could not use the logo as part of the resort’s logo, but it could use it in brochures or event fliers as taking place in “beautiful [logo: Borrego Springs] California.” Where the words “Chamber of Commerce” now appear, would be the words, “San Diego County, California.”

Rationale:

It’s attractive, easy to read and does a good job of portraying the community. By allowing its use in promoting local events (to identify the location), it will create continuity, and will be remembered. Frequency is very important – the more people see the logo, the faster the connection to the community. Just think of the Nike swatch or McDonald’s golden arches.

Approximate cost: \$100 to provide the logo in various formats on disk, and to remove “Chamber of Commerce” (for non-chamber use), adding “in San Diego County, California.”

Recommended funding source: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce



Marketing**Recommendation #2: Create a photo library**

A professionally produced photo library should be developed and should include between 50 and 100 photographs in high-resolution digital format, on CD ROM. Photos should include primarily, activity-oriented subjects – people enjoying a range of activities. While scenic shots are important in setting the tone for the experience, in reality, scenic vistas only last a few minutes before the visitor moves on to other places and/or activities. What will keep visitors in Borrego Springs for multiple days, are photos of people playing tennis or golf – not just pictures of golf courses or tennis courts. Photos should include:

- State Park visitors center (interior), amphitheater, the grounds (in blossom)
- Palm Canyon trail hike
- Golfing, swimming, lounging in the sun poolside, tennis
- Hiking and biking in scenic settings
- Desert tours (vehicle and hiking)
- Fonts Point lookout
- Dining (both casual and formal)
- Pedestrian shopping (interior and exterior shots)
- Slot Canyon and other canyon/oasis hikes
- Educational tours (kids and interpreters)
- Agricultural tours, retail nurseries
- Roadside fruit stands
- Christmas Circle events and people enjoying the circle (picnics, etc.)

These are just a few examples of photos that should be included.

Every one of the photos listed above should include people. After all, we are selling experiences, not just the place. Because we are recommending the photo library be developed and used with public funding (Transient Occupancy Taxes), private resorts and businesses cannot be identified specifically in the photos. However, if a visitor calls the Chamber and asks “where is that pool in the Activities Guide?” the answer can be given; “it was taken at La Casa del Zorro, but nearly every resort in the valley offers pools and water features.” Pools, tennis courts, golf courses, dining, lodging rooms should be taken in an intimate setting (close-ups), as opposed to larger overall view photos of an entire resort area.

Scenic photos (not necessarily with people):

- Scenic vistas of the valley, mountains, golf courses
- Wildlife and fauna

In reviewing the various brochures created by resorts and organizations in the valley, there are already outstanding photos available, if the owner would allow the Chamber of Commerce to use them in promotional efforts.

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With regards to photography, whoever takes the photo owns it for life. In order to use a photograph, you must “license” its use – buy or get permission to use the photo. Photos are automatically copyrighted by the photographer and do not need to be registered with the Copyright office in Washington, D.C.

If recognizable people are seen in the photos, a “release” must be signed by those in the photo allowing you to use their picture in marketing materials. This is very important, and very few people will object to you using their likeness – especially since you are marketing the overall experience of Borrego Springs rather than a specific business.

The bottom line:

- Photos sell tourism.
- Photos can close the sale without a word of text.
- Photos should, and can, carry the message.
- Photos should have “wow” appeal.
- Photos should always sell the “experience,” not just the place.
- Scenic photos set the mood, the ambiance: do the ones you’ve picked do that?
- Without top-notch photography, much of your marketing effort and funds will be ineffective, and therefore wasted.

Steps:

a. Collect and look through the various brochures produced by businesses and organizations in the valley, by ConVis, the State Tourism office, and other regional organizations that may be promoting Borrego Springs. Note the photos that do the best job of marketing the experience. Does each photo make you want to go there? Does the photo sell the experience? The very best photos of the desert (flora, fauna, scenic vistas, etc.) that we’ve seen are used in the Natural History Association marketing materials and publications. Use of these photos could save money, and would certainly enhance the marketing effort tremendously. The Park would be an excellent resource for photography relating to the park. Hopefully, their photo library could be used by the community to promote the park and its amenities.

b. Contact local and regional professional photographers to see if they have “stock photos” of Borrego Springs. You can find these photographers by going to book stores and looking at scenic photo books of California and other regions, making note of the photographers, then putting them in a database. Most of these photo books include contact information for the contributing photographers. Once you have a database put together, send them a letter telling them what you are doing, and asking if they have photographs which would be available for use on the Chamber website and for use in marketing materials. Invite the photographers to send you prints (or slides) that you can look through to determine what photos you can use. Also invite the photographers to actually visit Borrego Springs to take the photos you need. Once they take the photos,

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they can submit them for use, and if accepted, you'll negotiate for their use.

c. Get professional help for the previous and next steps. Negotiating for photography use is a specialized expertise – you can negotiate for single use, unlimited use, and size and placement of the photo also can make a difference. Additionally, final photo selection, scanning, and archiving the library can also be much easier with professional assistance.

d. Contact local resorts to see if they have professional photography (that doesn't specifically identify the resort) that the community could use in its marketing effort. This could help reduce costs. Likewise, if a photographer is commissioned to capture some local images, perhaps a cooperative effort could take place where the photographer would also be hired by resorts for their specific needs, again saving some costs or providing a stronger photo library.

e. Once you've selected a top-notch library, you'll negotiate for their use. Hopefully, many of the photographs will be provided in exchange for "photo credits" (their name next to the photo in each use) as opposed to cash – although don't expect this with professional photographers. If you help the photographer promote his or her photography, the licensing cost will be reduced. For instance, if you use professional photography on the website, offer a link to the photographer's site, or even include a bio and contact information on the site that will promote the photographer's work.

f. The goal is to end up with approximately 50 photographs. You'll need the original slides, transparencies or negatives, which will be sent to a professional scanning lab and digitally mastered and stored on several CD ROMS. Remember: Every photograph should be of "National Geographic" quality. All photos should be scanned at 8" x 10", at 300dpi, in CMYK, TIF format (the lab will understand this).

g. Once the photo library is complete, print out a photo catalog (six to eight photos per page), in full-color (professionally printed), with contact information on each page, which should be sent to film commissions in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and the State's Film Commission as well. Also offer them the library on CD ROM if it would be useful to them.

Rationale:

Nothing sells tourism like photography. A photograph really is worth a thousand words. Only photos that make you think or say "Wow! I want to go there!" should be used in the marketing effort. The current photographs used on the Chamber's website (www.borregosprings.org), in marketing materials, and by the State Park are not of the quality to close the sale.

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Approximate cost: \$12,500 for long-term licensing costs, high-resolution digital scans, archiving, professional assistance.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grants

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce or Public Relations firm

Marketing**Recommendation #3: Create an Activities Guide**

We recommend that a 20-page rack booklet (4" x 9") be created, in full-color that will sell the Borrego Springs experience. The Activities Guide will be a miniature book, of sorts, that will include the following contents:

- a. Page 1: Front cover with a spectacular photograph
- b. Page 2: Inside front cover: full page photograph
- c. Page 3: Introduction to Borrego Springs
- d. Pages 4-18:
 - i. Weather and seasons
 - ii. Location and distances
 - iii. Golf and tennis
 - iv. Swimming and resort activities
 - v. Hiking & biking
 - vi. Lodging and dining overview
 - vii. Shopping
 - viii. Cultural and performing arts
 - ix. Agricultural tours
 - x. Fonts Point
 - xi. Palm Canyon Trail
 - xii. Anza-Borrego Desert State park overview (2 page spread)
 - xiii. Camping and RVing in the valley
 - xiv. Day trips from Borrego Springs: Julian, other regional sites
 - xv. Wildlife and Desert fauna - Natural History Center
- e. Page 19: Inside back cover: full page photograph
- f. Page 20: Back cover: Contact information, Southern Cal. Map, informational resources

The booklet could be expanded to 24 pages which would allow inclusion of other hikes, scenic overlooks, and valley attractions.

Additionally, we recommend that the Activities Guide be a cooperative project with funding from other sources. For instance, the cost to develop, produce, and print the Guide would be approximately \$45,000; a cost of approximately \$2,000 per page. Perhaps State Parks would contribute \$6,000 to \$8,000 for the pages that will promote the park, the Visitors Center, and park attractions. Because the park, itself, has no marketing budget, perhaps funds could be dedicated from State Park headquarters in Sacramento.

Additionally, the Guide could become a public/private effort with pages sold to some of the major resorts and attractions that offer activities to the public, such as golf or tennis schools. In this case, each "advertiser" would help subsidize the Guide by paying, for instance, \$2,500 per page. These pages would not be developed as "ads," but would be

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developed to look like the rest of the Guide – informational, with photography, highlights, and contact information. This way nothing in the Activities Guide will look like advertising, but will effectively promote resorts, swimming, golfing, tennis, dining, etc. If there is a good response from local resorts, The Mall, or other “partners,” the Guide could be expanded to as many as 32 pages.

One other note: The Activities Guide would focus on promoting the peak season as “Fall, winter and spring” – an eight month season (October through May) and what visitors can expect during this period. Additionally, it would promote the summer season (June through September) as unique with advantages: a genuine desert experience, early morning walks in cool temperatures and not a soul around, having the pool to yourself, hikes without crowds, lower rates, etc., etc.

The Activities Guide would NOT heavily promote the desert bloom. It would, of course, be mentioned with the variables, but would not be a focus. Making it the focus sometimes disappoints visitors who make the trek in March and find out the bloom hasn’t happened yet or is over. Its heavy promotion (primarily by the press) also brings droves of visitors to Borrego Springs within a very short period of time which the town and its merchants cannot reasonably handle. While it’s spectacular, it should not be the focus in any marketing or public relations efforts.

The current full-color rack card should be redesigned as an effective “teaser” or “lure” piece that will encourage potential visitors to request the Activities Guide by calling the Chamber’s toll-free number, or by requesting it on the Chamber’s newly designed website (a request for information form).

The rack card would be widely distributed (it’s far less expensive than the Activities Guide) and should be redeveloped to be in full-color on both sides so that it is more effective. By using the rack card as the teaser, it will reduce the number of Activities Guides that need to be distributed and printed. However, the Activities Guide should be distributed to visitor information centers throughout San Diego County, in the Coachella Valley area, and Los Angeles (near major destinations).

Rationale:

While the Chamber of Commerce current rack card and prior brochure are nice, they are marginal at closing the sale, primarily due to the fact that they do not provide enough information or activities to convince people that Borrego Springs is worthy of a two hour (or longer) drive. Visitors will go places if you can keep them busy four times longer than it takes them to get there. We often refer to this as the “Four Times Rule.” If a person must drive 15 minutes, do you offer them activities that will keep them there for an hour (four times 15 minutes)? So, if visitors must drive two hours to Borrego Springs, can you keep them busy for eight hours – which is an overnight stay? Our initial visitor research

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said no, but when we physically came to Borrego Springs and started to explore the valley, we found that there was plenty to do (even in midsummer) to warrant at least a three or four day stay. A professionally produced, high-quality Activities Guide will make that sale for the community. It will say, in essence, that Borrego Springs is easily worth the drive, and that the drive is, in fact, an incredible part of the experience (whether via Julian and Yaqui Pass, Montezuma Grade, or from Salton Sea).

The Activities Guide would replace the prior brochure, and would be distributed widely throughout the region. The rack card would be distributed throughout the state and to northern areas (Washington, Oregon, and other markets that need to be identified), and are discussed further in the Distribution recommendations section.

Approximate cost: \$45,000 including the printing of 100,000 copies of a 20-page Guide. Co-op participation will not reduce this amount substantially, as those additions would add additional pages to the Guide. Each co-op participant would provide a \$500 (or so) subsidy to the development and printing of the Guide.

To provide the funding for redesign and reprints of the rack card, we recommend that only 60,000 copies of the Activities Guide be printed the first year and those savings be applied to the rack card project.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce, professional ad agency/graphic design firm

Marketing**Recommendation #4: Develop a full-color map of the valley**

We recommend that a full-color 11”x17” map of the Borrego Springs valley be created and printed. It would fold in half to 8-1/2”x11” – in a brochure format. The cover would, once again, sell the experience through a major photograph or collection of photos. The back cover would include a state map and Southern California map (detailed next), contact information, distances, and other travel information such as driving times, seasonal alerts, etc.

The map (interior spread) should include a California state map (small) showing the approximate location of Borrego Springs in relation to Mexico, San Diego, Los Angeles and Palm Springs. Because it would be small, it doesn't need to show freeways or much detail, but should be topographic, showing mountain ranges and coastal regions. The map would include a larger Southern California map that shows major freeway/access routes to Borrego Springs from San Diego, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, etc. Finally, the bulk of the map would show the entire valley in a full-color topographic format, showcasing the mountains, and would show the location of the Chamber, resorts and accommodations, Christmas Circle and the shopping district, agricultural areas/tours, location of Fonts Point, Palm Canyon, State Park Visitors Center, local churches, and other area attractions, amenities, and activities.

The map should be professionally designed, should include a distance chart (in both miles and kilometers), contact information, photos where appropriate, as well as seasonal travel info and resources. There are several map resources that should be tapped into including State Parks, the Natural History Association, and the Borrego Sun.

The maps would be available locally at the Chamber, in restaurants, resorts/hotels, retail establishments, and at Christmas Circle (more on this later), and would be sent to visitors requesting it. It would be noted in the Activities Guide that the map is available on the website or can be mailed to them on request.

Rationale:

Because Borrego Springs is so spread out, and its visitor attractions, amenities, and resorts are scattered throughout the valley, getting around and finding things to do is confusing and many activities are often missed.

Current maps available at the Chamber are very poor, hard to read, and do not show where things are. The Borrego Sun has a much better map, but it too, does not do an effective job of helping visitors navigate and find attractions around the valley.

Approximate cost: \$12,000 including development of the actual maps (onetime costs), and printing of 20,000 maps (a 12 to 18 month supply). The map would be produced digitally and would also be placed on the website for download and viewing – included in this price.

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Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #5: Develop a press kit**

Because Borrego Springs has an extremely limited marketing budget, we recommend that the marketing effort be produced through a professionally managed public relations program (coming up next). A key element in the PR program will be the development of a press kit which would include:

- Photo sample sheet
- Letterhead for insert materials
- Presentation folder

The photo sample sheet would be an 8-1/2" x 11" page with sample photos on it, printed in full color. It would provide contact information regarding the use of photography, and how to get a CD with all available photography – which would not be sent with every press kit. The photo sample sheet would simply be a teaser to show that quality photography is on hand.

Included in the press kit will be:

- Backgrounder: information about the community's history and uniqueness
- Events summary, calendar and contact information
- Activities and attractions: A summary of things to see and do in Borrego Springs
- Weather and seasons: A summary of the differences between the two seasons (the peak season: fall, winter and spring – October through May, and the Summer season – June through September).
- Resources: This would include contacts, local resources they can tap into such as the Natural History Association, Borrego Sun, Chamber, Vitalization Group, State Park personnel, tour operators (Borrego Paul), resort contacts, etc.
- The 4:45 CD Video, which is an excellent selling tool - which, by the way, should be expanded to about 7:00 including more resort and local attractions beyond the park.

These pieces would be printed on a Borrego Springs letterhead which is included in this budget item.

Also included in the press kit would be the Activities Guide, the Map Brochure, and select pieces produced by the Anza-Borrego Natural History Association.

Finally, the kit would be placed in a presentation folder made from a very nice cover-stock paper in a desert color with the logo embossed onto the cover. This would provide an attractive, subtle, yet elegant cover, and would be less expensive than printing a full-color presentation folder.

Approximate cost: \$12,500 including the design and printing of 1,000 letterheads,

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1,000 second sheets, 500 presentation folders, 500 photo sample sheets on glossy paper, and writing, editing and research for the insert materials (which would be printed on a laser printer as needed). This should provide for a two year PR effort, which would be hired out (more on this upcoming).

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce and PR firm

Marketing**Recommendation #6: Implementation of a public relations program**

Press kits should never be simply sent out to publications and media outlets in hopes of being “discovered.” They are used as part of an organized public relations effort. Publicity is a specialized field that can be far more effective than advertising – especially in the case of Borrego Springs, which can garner a tremendous amount of publicity because of its uniqueness to any other location in the U.S. – or the world, for that matter.

Publicity is more effective than advertising for several reasons:

- a. Articles have three times the readership of ads
- b. Articles have more credibility. After all, someone else is tooting your horn, whereas in ads, you’re tooting your own horn.
- c. A professionally produced PR program will garner a 300% return on the investment in terms of “earned media.” This is the value of the publicity, if you had to buy the space in the publication. For instance, a full page in *Sunset Magazine*, if you had to purchase it, would cost more than \$12,000. Since it was run at no charge (just the cost of the PR professional), the value is \$12,000 – actually more, because it garners far greater readership than an ad of the same size.

Public relations professionals usually work on a retainer basis, billed monthly. They charge by the hour up to the maximum number of hours the retainer will cover. For instance, if a PR firm is hired on a monthly retainer of \$2,500 a month, they will limit their work to \$30,000 that year (\$2,500 per month). Some months you may see a PR bill for \$3,000 and another month a bill for \$2,000 – with the average “allowance” at \$2,500. Agencies work in different ways, and so this example may not apply to all.

We recommend that the Chamber, under this program, hire the services of a PR professional (or firm) to promote Borrego Springs. The firm should have reach into other areas throughout the western U.S. (primary market), as well as into European and Asian countries (secondary market).

The first order of business for the PR professional is to determine who comes to Borrego Springs (by season), and why. If summer visitors are primarily coming from Japan and European countries to experience the desert in the summer (the success of Death Valley), then the effort would include these markets. If peak season visitors are coming from Washington, Oregon, and northern states, then efforts should be made to reach these audiences. Who goes to Palm Springs and where are they from?

The PR effort for Borrego Springs is worthy of a western U.S. and foreign program. Yes, it should include California residents (the primary market) but should go far beyond that. You’ll want a firm that can reach into markets beyond Southern California, thus the firm does not need to necessarily be in Southern California.

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Approximate cost: \$15,000 in 2002, \$30,000 in 2003. This is based on a \$2,500 per month retainer, beginning in June of 2002. The reason for the delay is in the timing: A photo library, Activities Guide, Map brochure, presentation folder and press kit, and other key elements of this program need to be developed first so the program can be successful.

Funding: Annual Transient Occupancy Tax grants

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #7: Hire professional services**

While the responsibility for producing the materials and implementing this marketing plan will fall on the Chamber, professional assistance should be hired to steer the development of the marketing materials, website, distribution program, and public relations effort.

We recommend that the Chamber develop a Request for Qualifications for professional advertising, design, and public relations services. You do NOT want to issue a request for proposals (RFP). In marketing you get what you pay for. You should find the very best firm you can find, with deep experience in promoting tourism, and once you've selected the firm with the best references, the best credentials, and the most effective results in their efforts, you then negotiate with them.

You can easily find graphic design firms that charge \$20 an hour and you can find firms that charge \$500 an hour. You get what you pay for. If you were faced with a serious legal challenge, would you hire the \$50 an hour attorney, or the \$300 an hour attorney?

If you are not able to negotiate a satisfactory arrangement, you move on to the second choice, and keep going until you find a qualified firm (or person) who will do the best job for the community, within its budget. Once you've negotiated the deal, you notify the other finalists that someone has already been selected.

As you hire the professional, have them provide project estimates for the elements detailed in this plan. Have them show samples of similar projects. Key to the process is making sure that you (the Chamber) will own the rights to all the materials they produce.

One note: Rick Rabuck, the principal at the Rabuck Agency in Los Angeles has donated a tremendous amount of time and pro-bono services to this effort. The quality of the work is top notch. If Rick continues to provide services for the community at greatly reduced costs or as a pro-bono effort, there really is no need to look for more costly alternatives. If his agency, at some point, needs to charge competitive rates, then issue the RFQ to make sure the charges and costs are competitive with other agencies - after all, you are using public funds which will be scrutinized.

With regards to the Public Relations effort, many marketing firms do either advertising and creative services or Public Relations. In your Request for Qualifications, make sure the respondents know they can "partner" with a PR firm if they don't have in-house PR capabilities. The two firms will need to work together, but do not necessarily have to be within the same walls or company.

Only enter into a one-year agreement, which can be extended one year at a time for a

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period of three years. Then go out for proposal again – it’s always wise to keep checking the competition, pricing, and will keep your contractor in the mode of watching the bottom line. The annual contract sends a message that if the work does not result in increased tourism spending, they will be up for review.

That being said, it’s also important to note that these programs take time to implement, and the community should not expect immediate results. See the “Pushing A Car” story in the Supporting Documentation section of this Plan.

A sample RFP you can work from is included in the supporting documentation of this Plan. The County can also provide some assistance in helping the community issue and advertise the RFQ.

Approximate cost: \$500 for ad placement, mailing costs, other related costs.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce marketing/promotions committee

Marketing**Recommendation #8: Development of a template print ad, print advertising**

Your new, or current, advertising agency should also develop one or two sample print ads (in full color), as templates that can be used as publication advertising opportunities become available. One of the ad samples should be a co-op ad that promotes Borrego Springs and local resorts or ad participants. This helps them by marketing Borrego Springs (always sell the experience before the place), and then their co-op portion promotes them as the place to stay – or eat – or shop.

Rationale:

The development of these sample magazine ads will provide a marketing theme, look, feel, and messages designed to create a response (direct response advertising): they will log onto the website, or will call a toll-free number for their “FREE Activities Guide to Borrego Springs, California.”

Look through magazines to get ideas. What communities caught your eye? Would you want to go see the community as a result of seeing the ad?

Approximate cost: \$3,500 for three or four sample 1/3 page magazine ad samples

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

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Recommendation #9. State Parks: Print 150,000 copies of the tabloid

The Anza-Borrego Desert State Park produces an annual first-class newsprint tabloid publication, and prints 50,000 copies each year for distribution to park visitors - primarily in the Borrego Springs valley. Because the publication is so good, a minimum of 150,000 should be printed each year and distributed throughout a much larger region which should include all of Southern California – particularly the L.A., San Diego, and Palm Springs areas.

A distribution program should be established where the publication is sent (in bundles) to Chambers of Commerce, visitor information centers, and convention and visitors bureaus, throughout Southern California. Additionally, an intern or staff person should call each of the places (probably between 70 and 100 locations) at least quarterly, to ask if they need additional copies. Those that receive copies continually request more (they go quickly) yet, quantities are not available.

If 150,000 copies is not sufficient, more should be printed and distributed. This is a very important publication, and an excellent marketing tool which should be used year round, and should always be available – even if additional reprints are required.

Rationale:

By early summer, the supply of the publication becomes scarce – yet there are still six or seven months of the year to be promoted. Regional visitor information centers call and request copies, but few are available. The park is one of California's major attractions, yet it's very poorly promoted - once again due, primarily, to lack of funding locally. This publication is nicely produced, and can be an effective marketing tool, yet when supplies run dry, the marketing effort is, for all intents and purposes, done for the year other than local efforts by staff with publicity efforts (media contacts and tours).

Printing 150,000 copies will reduce the cost per piece, and will provide an adequate supply to last the full year.

With regards to distribution, there is a display rack at the campground check-in point, yet in five visits over a four week period, the display was empty. It needs to be refilled on a weekly basis – even during the summer months. In visits and calls to various visitor bureaus and chambers of commerce in the region, none had any information about the park. This lack of marketing materials hurts the entire economy of Borrego Springs, which relies heavily on the Park as its primary visitor attraction.

Approximate cost: Approximately \$25,000

Funding: State Parks

Responsibility: California State Parks (production, printing, distribution, and related costs, working with local organizations for assistance)

Marketing**Recommendation #10: Set up a distribution program**

Creating the Activities Guide and printing 150,000 Park tabloids does nothing to promote the area if they are not distributed. These materials sitting in a back room somewhere, is the last thing you want to have happen. About one third (50,000) of the park tabloids should take place in the valley, while the other two-thirds (100,000) should take place elsewhere. The rack card should be distributed throughout the nine western states at key locations. The Activities Guide should be distributed throughout the Southern California region with an emphasis on the Coachella Valley communities.

We recommend the Chamber (intern, staff or volunteers) develop a database of visitor information centers where the Activities Guide should be distributed. This data base should also be forwarded to the State Park for distribution of their materials.

The Chamber should order the book “World Chamber of Commerce Directory” which comes out annually and lists Chambers of Commerce, Convention & Visitors Bureaus, and Visitor Information Centers, by city and state. It includes addresses, contact information, and phone numbers. The book is published annually by The World Chamber of Commerce Directory. They can be contacted by calling 970/663-3231.

There are literally hundreds of Visitor Center/Chambers in California alone, and so the project will be to call each asking a series of questions:

- a. Do you accept community brochures from around the region?
- b. What are your operating hours?
- c. Do you see a lot of visitors who browse through the literature you have on hand?
- d. Can we send you our brochure?
- e. How many would you like us to send you?
- f. Who would be our contact?

The effort is to find the top 70 to 100 visitor centers in California to send the Activities Guide to. You want visitor centers that are open all week (at least five days), are popular destination areas and see lots of visitors, and are willing to add the Guide to their brochure racks. Because there is a tremendous amount of turnover in this industry, contacts in the book are often outdated – hence the individual phone calls.

This is a major project, but very important to an effective marketing program. Critical visitor information centers would include those close to major attractions (and can include the attractions themselves) such as the San Diego Zoo, SeaWorld, Disneyland, Third Street Promenade and the Pier in Santa Monica, as well as others. The Guide should be distributed to State Park Visitor Information Centers, and Chambers in key locations throughout Southern California – particularly along major interstates and tourist routes (such as Highway 101 along the coast).

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Other places should include AAA offices, National Park visitor information centers – virtually anywhere where potential visitors go to get information and ideas on places to visit. There are a number of vendors who distribute brochures (Certified Folder Display is one such company), but on a limited budget, we recommend not going this route.

Distribution within Borrego Springs is important as well. The Activities Guide should be available at every restaurant, resort/hotel/B&B, retail store and at every attraction. The Chamber should provide these places with a counter-top brochure holder (about \$2.50 each) and brochures. A volunteer or staff member should make the rounds once a week during the summer and every other day during the peak season to make sure everyone has a supply of the Guide. Give each place extras, so that when they run out they can restock the rack holder. Because the Guide is thick, each holder will only accommodate 20 or so Guides.

With regards to the State Park tabloid, these should be distributed by State Parks at other state park facilities, key visitor information centers that can accommodate the larger sized paper (which are easily seen and snapped up).

Rationale:

Brochures are only effective if they're "out there." Distributing them within the community is important, but most importantly, they are designed to convince people coming into and living in the greater region to visit Borrego Springs. Therefore, the bulk of the effort must be to put the Guide in the hands of potential visitors in key locations:

- a. Throughout Southern California (primary market – peak season)
- b. Throughout Central and Northern California (secondary market)
- c. Throughout the west: Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, etc. (primary market – summer season)
- d. Foreign locations (as available)

Distributing them locally serves a single primary purpose: to convince visitors to stay longer, after all, there's so many things to see and do – especially once they go through the Activities Guide.

The Map Brochure should also be distributed locally at resort and park locations (and at the Chamber), but would primarily be a requested piece, and would not be distributed outside the valley itself.

Approximate cost: Several weeks of work to develop the database, \$5,000 for actual shipping charges, cartons, and labels. This provides for shipping the Guide to the 100 centers on a quarterly basis or as needed. It should also help cover the cost of mailing the Guide to visitors who request them via the website.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the State Park

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Recommendation #11: Make the Chamber work 24/7

The Chamber of Commerce should provide outside displays and a covered display rack for marketing materials that can be accessed every day of the year, and every hour of the day.

We recommend that visitor information be placed on the front “porch” area with a sign readable from the street stating: “24 hour visitor information.” A covered rack or display case should be present and should accommodate the State Park tabloid, the Activities Guide, Map brochure, and other information about Borrego Springs, including a listing of local lodging and dining establishments.

Rationale:

The new Chamber of Commerce building represents a major investment and it should be put to work every day of the year, around the clock. Recommended upcoming signage will direct visitors to the Chamber office, where they should be able to secure information regardless of time of day or day of week.

Approximate cost: \$1,500 for the display rack and sign

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #12: Upgrade the website**

The internet has become the primary source for visitor information around the world. Borrego Springs can be one of Southern California's most powerful draws if it is marketed effectively. The current website needs to be redesigned so that it will effectively close the sale. When visitors leaves the website, they should be convinced that they need to visit Borrego Springs – and sooner rather than later.

The website should include the following elements:

- It should be photography based – photos can make the sale.

- It should include the Activities Guide, but with even greater detail.

- It needs to include a Request for Information form they can fill out, on-line, to receive the Activities Guide, Park tabloid and other information that would be listed as available. The Request for Info form should also ask, “Would you like to be notified periodically via e-mail about upcoming events and special happenings in Borrego Springs?” E-mail marketing (with permission) is a very effective and inexpensive marketing tool.

- It should include a links page to the State Park, and other local organizations, resorts, shopping, dining, etc.

- It should include a weather link (current weather conditions and forecast). There are numerous websites that you can link to that will provide weather information by geographic area or even by zip code.

- It should include much better maps specific to the direction visitors will be coming from, instead of the poor quality Mapquest maps now on the site.

- The valley map (Map brochure) should be on the site for viewing and downloadable as a PDF file.

- The website should have a “What’s new this week” page that is updated once a week, if not more often. This would include information about spring blooms, events, recent rains, and other information that will keep people coming back.

- There should be a “Special Deals” page to post special deals (two-for-one overnight stays, discounts, etc. at retail shops, restaurants, lodging facilities). This will also keep visitors coming back to the site.

- Chamber member information should be broken into different pages:
 - a. Local services & real estate (banks, the paper, professional services, etc.)
 - b. Retail shops, galleries, and stores

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- c. Lodging and dining
- d. Membership information, links, etc.

- The welcome page should have a counter on it (unique visitors to the site) and should include the “last updated” date.

The Chamber and/or volunteers should scour the web for community sites they feel effectively market that community. Does their site convince you to go there? Is it effective? Note the site and what you liked best about it.

Then the ad agency should be given direction as to what the site should include and the “bells and whistles” you’d like added. The simpler, easy to navigate, but attractive sites are best. Do not get carried away with gimmicks, flashing lights, etc. Remember the image you’re trying to portray of Borrego Springs: The quiet, remote, getaway – not the urban Palm Springs image.

Not only does the website need a major overhaul, it needs continual updates every two weeks or so. It also needs to be listed on major search engines using key words for each page of the site that pertains to that specific activity.

Chamber members should have direct links to their sites as well.

NOTE: During the development of this plan, the Chamber, working with The Rabuck Agency, has been redeveloping the site which is already greatly improved. This recommendations do not replace the new effort, but should add to it.

Approximate cost: Approximately \$8,500 from concept, development, to uploading it to the host site. You can spend anywhere from \$1,500 to \$50,000 or more for a website. Once again, you get what you pay for. We feel \$8,500 will be sufficient to create an effective site that can always be improved and upgraded.

Hosting: \$20 to \$35 a month. This is the charge for “parking” the site and domain name on a host computer somewhere.

Updates: \$250 a month, \$3,000 per year. Website updates should be produced every two weeks to keep the site fresh and to keep people coming back.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #13: State Park marketing efforts**

We recommend that the park do whatever it can to aggressively step up its marketing efforts in terms of personnel assignments, signage, and outreach efforts. We, quite frankly, were shocked at how few people (even in Southern California) even knew that the park existed. This increased marketing presence could be enhanced through a variety of vehicles. Here are some initial ideas:

- a. Through internships, AmeriCorps, or Conservation Corps, staff/volunteers would travel throughout the region to talk about the park: its wildlife, fauna, and its prehistoric history. This can be done with slide and/or PowerPoint presentations and actual fossils, live animals and/or plants from the region. An incredibly fascinating program could be put together easily and would garner incredible interest. The front page article of the Parks tabloid squeezing 500 million years of history into a single year would make a fascinating presentation of its own! The program would be available to Kiwanis, Rotary and other service clubs, schools, environmental education centers, chambers of commerce (dinners and luncheons), at tourism conferences, colleges, etc. This type of program should be implemented and produced year round.
- b. A trade show booth should be put together that would include photographs, history, and stories about the Anza-Borrego desert and park. This could be a cooperative effort with the Chamber of Commerce and/or the Natural History Association. The “booth” or display would be placed in regional malls, convention center common areas, large office building foyers, transit stations, airports, and other high-traffic areas on a rotating basis.
- c. The park should promote itself in the other state parks through the distribution of the newsprint tabloid, and displays in other parks – including National parks in the state.
- d. The park should do everything it can to help market its vendors - particularly park tour operators. This promotes “responsible” and low-risk tours of park areas (in terms of park damage and personal risk), and helps the economy of the area. The park is an import tool for the region: its existence, with some marketing, can provide the basis for importing millions of dollars in spending to the region and to California, which translates to increased tax revenues, which in turns provides additional funding for the parks system.
- e. The park should also establish more formalized marketing partnerships with local organizations and businesses to cross-market the park, and to provide educational tours and workshops, to promote stewardship of the park. The park should help fund the Activities Guide, and other marketing efforts as part of a “team approach” rather than a stand-alone entity. This would reduce overall costs of the program, and provide a stronger marketing presence.

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f. Finally, the park needs to do a much better job of community outreach within Borrego Springs and become a stronger part of the marketing effort - for the overall community, not just the park itself.

Rationale:

The lifeblood of the Borrego Springs community revolves around the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, both literally and figuratively. As the park goes, so does the community, to a great extent.

Dozens of local residents and businesses feel that Park staff would rather see fewer and fewer visitors – after all, that would mean less work and less “destruction” of the park. Just the thought of additional signage directing people to Palm Canyon or to the Visitors Center evokes fear of trampled areas and far too many people, and the demise of the Bighorn Sheep. It’s a difficult balancing act, but needs to be better addressed and not in a defensive manner, but through the creation of stewardship partnerships. Over the course of the develop of this plan we continued to receive e-mails, comments and quotes that enhance these perceptions which do little to create working “partnerships” within the community. The business community wants the park to “open up” and do a better job promoting itself. On the other hand, the perception is that park staff are there to preserve the park and the fewer visitors, the better preservation. An aggressive outreach effort and the creation of more formalized partnerships between the business community and the park may help the business community understand the delicate balance between promotion and preservation. Ask the business community for help. For suggestions. For recommendations. While the park does not “need” the local community involved in its operation, the community REALLY needs the park involved in its efforts.

This plan is geared to extending the season, getting visitors to stay longer, and getting additional visitors in the shoulder seasons. This all means additional visitors to the park and its amenities/attractions, additional work for park staff and volunteers, and a tougher job in preserving certain areas of the park. What can the business community do to help? What can they bring to the table to assist the park? How can local businesses assist with preservation? And likewise, what can the park do to help the community that relies so heavily on it?

Anza-Borrego could host tens of thousands (if not millions) of visitors, while preserving the park through educational programs, an aggressive outreach program, and through open communication with local businesses. The Anza Borrego Desert Natural History Association does an excellent job promoting the park and its preservation. We understand that much of its efforts were developed in partnership with the park and the park should take advantage of this work. It’s publications are world-class. Additionally, rather than reduce the visibility of trails like Palm Canyon, better promote newly opened trails and scenic vistas that will spread visitors out so that the concentration is not so heavily

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geared to a single location or two. This may even include opening up new areas. Perhaps before visitors hike Palm Canyon, they would sign a “permit” form that states the time and date they are hiking the trail, and asks them to acknowledge key ingredients to preserving the park and its natural inhabitants.

Managing and protecting a park like Anza-Borrego seems contradictory to “marketing,” “outreach,” and “economic development,” but these three words **MUST** play a role with this particular park, due to the fact that it surrounds a community whose survival depends a great deal on the park. The park is a public asset, paid for by visitors and residents alike: of the 650,000 acres, only a small fraction is disturbed by visitors – so promote it to them. Let them see what you have to offer. Educate them. The park is a powerful economic engine to this community and that should be taken into consideration as the community works to better market itself and extend its highly seasonal tourism trade. The park should be a partner in this effort, not a foe.

After seeing the materials and information published by the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (of which the Park helped to develop), it’s really a shame that this organization is not more actively involved with the Park and perhaps this relationship can somehow be rekindled and fostered. Once again, the community will be much more effective as one loud voice instead of a bunch of small individual voices.

Park materials (outside of the annual tabloid) we found tended to concentrate on restrictions and do’s and don’ts, where the History Association materials really do a terrific job of promoting the parks pristine and delicate environment and it would be a benefit to all if these materials could be incorporated into the total mix of promotion and preservation.

Approximate cost: Undetermined at this point.

Responsibility: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, working with the Chamber of Commerce, the Natural History Association, and other local organizations.

Marketing**Recommendation #14: Agricultural tourism**

Agricultural tourism should be promoted – after all, it’s a fast growing segment of the tourism industry. However, the growers in Borrego Springs need to do their part.

- a. Places closed to the public such as Ellis Farms, Desert Flora, should be opened to the public for tours – year round.
- b. The farms should take part in the development of interpretive signs detailed later in these recommendations.
- c. The farms should be more a part of the marketing effort, perhaps cooperatively pooling funds to assist in the development of the Activities Guide and Map.
- d. We recommend that a marketing co-op of valley growers (citrus, nurseries, date farms, etc.) be developed and a representative become a part of the Chamber’s marketing efforts. If only ten growers each put up at least \$1,000 a year to help promote the valley, that would go a long way in developing a top-notch marketing program.

Rationale:

There is a definite love-hate relationship in the valley between many growers and valley residents. It is not in the scope of this project to address issues such as water usage, but as long as agriculture exists in the valley, it should be heavily promoted as an attraction, and the agricultural community needs to be a part of that effort. This way the community can derive the additional benefit of its existence.

So, what’s in it for the growers? Not only will visitors, during the harvest season, buy produce directly from the farms, but when they see where Seley Reds, for example, are actually grown, there is a connection, and that’s the brand they are most likely to purchase next time they’re in the grocery store. “Brand awareness” and the link, is a powerful marketing tool that translates to greater sales. The Tillamook Cheese factory in Tillamook, Oregon hosts more than 900,000 visitors a year. Do the visits make them money? No, it costs a bundle. So why do they do it? Because when those 900,000 people go home they buy their new preference: Tillamook Cheese – after all, they saw it being made. They were there. There’s a personal connection.

Approximate cost: Little, to be determined

Funding: The Chamber and Ag businesses should look at marketing assistance programs possibly available through the Farm Bureau, Farm & Home Advisor, and other agricultural organizations. Also contact the State Tourism Division to see what they have that can help promote this industry.

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Responsibility: Interested agricultural businesses, working with the Chamber. The agri-businesses **MUST** take the lead, however.

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Throughout the Borrego Springs valley, there are numerous places that would be excellent tourist “attractions,” if only open to the public. Nearly every sign we saw posted signs that stated “Closed to the public” or “wholesale only.”

With new directional signage, and a stronger marketing program that includes agricultural tourism, it will be up to businesses in the industry to get together and assist in the program.

Until these businesses are willing to participate, the Chamber should hold on marketing the industry.

What should the industry do?

1. Create a marketing partnership of businesses who would like to promote their businesses to the public while providing a community service.
2. See if these businesses



would be willing to pool some funds to assist in the program, on an annual basis.

3. Have a representative join the Chamber’s marketing committee and become part of the marketing program. This will entail creating a list of places that are open, what they are offering, and times they will be open. It includes assistance in developing and writing interpretive signage at farms and key locations throughout the valley.

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Recommendation #15: Interpretive signage and vista-points

We recommend that a program be established to include the design, writing, and placement of interpretive signage at various locations throughout the valley.

Over the three year implementation of this plan, approximately 20 interpretive signs should be placed at key locations throughout Borrego Springs.

Each sign will be approximately 4' tall and 6' wide, and will detail "the story" of that particular site.

Rationale:

There are dozens of interesting stories to be told in the valley, and the two photos on this page are two of those stories. Additionally, placement of interpretive signs at farms and other areas not open to the public help educate visitors about the area, its history, its ecology, and its economy. This helps visitors become "stewards" of the valley, educates them (educational, historical and cultural tourism is the fastest growing area in the tourism industry).

Approximate cost: \$850 per sign (construction and placement). \$12,000 for the placement of 14 signs over a three year period. Ongoing signage maintenance is included in the signage recommendations section of this plan.

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce working with other local organizations and businesses.



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These photos are examples of “attractions” that visitors will find interesting. For those closed to the public, interpretive signage would let visitors learn about these places. As the Borrego Springs market area expands (people come from around the world to visit the Palm Springs area), visitors will be fascinated with the agriculture in the valley. How long does it take a palm tree to grow? How are they shipped? When is the season for dates, grapefruits and other citrus? What’s the difference between white, red and pink grapefruit? What are the cactus (top two photos) used for? Why the shade cloth? There is so much visitors can learn in an educational self-guided tour of the valley.



Marketing**Recommendation #16: Merchant hours and signage**

We recommend that the Chamber take the lead in working with local merchants who are closed during the summer months to change their “closed” signage to include when they will reopen. Dates do not have to be specific, perhaps “Closed until mid-October.”

Additionally, beginning in the spring of 2002, once this plan is well under way, the Chamber should encourage all businesses to remain open from mid-October through the end of May. Every two years, businesses should be encouraged to open two weeks earlier and remain open two weeks later: opening October 1st and closing June 15th.

Rationale:

Borrego Springs hosts thousands of visitors during the summer months (June through September) who find most retail stores, several restaurants, and numerous lodging establishments closed. These visitors have no idea whether these businesses are closed permanently, or have no idea when they will re-open. When speaking with visitors, many assumed that the businesses were only open from November through March and that they would not visit Borrego Springs again except during those periods when the town would be “open for business.”

On two visits we were convinced that the Borrego Valley Inn had gone under. The entrance drive had a chain across it and not a soul was around. A simple sign stating “Open October 1st” would let visitors know when the inn would be open, and that it is not permanently closed.

A professionally produced, effective, larger marketing program will help extend the seasons (over a period of years), and merchants should be encouraged to extend their operating season by two weeks every couple of years as the season grows.

Approximate cost: \$500 if the chamber were to assist in providing signs for the stores

Funding: Chamber membership dues

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

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Recommendation #17: Creation of a chamber marketing committee

We recommend that the Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce manage and implement this marketing program, with professional assistance. Marketing Borrego Springs should be the primary mission of the Chamber. In fact, 90% of its total effort should be geared to marketing.

With this in mind, the most important Chamber committee will be the “Promotions Committee.” This working committee should include the following representation:

- Three or four of the major resorts in the valley - the ones with the biggest marketing budgets. Hopefully, La Casa del Zorro will have an interest in working with the community and the marketing effort and will perhaps participate in the program as a part of this committee, or in another aspect of the overall plan.
- It should include a Chamber staff person who will oversee the program
- It should include a member of the Vitalization and/or Sponsor Group
- It should include a member of the Natural History Association
- It should include two or three other local businesses in the town center - that rely heavily on tourism for their livelihood.
- It should also include a community member, at large.

The Promotions Committee (or marketing committee) should be kept to less than 10 members so that things can get done. The larger the group, the less will get done when meeting every month.

The professionals hired for public relations and advertising should not sit on the committee, but should attend the monthly meetings, providing reports and recommendations.

Rationale:

This committee will have a single focus: bringing visitors to Borrego Springs for extended stays and, over time, for extended seasons. This is the most important program in this plan and it must be implemented by a group of dedicated individuals who stand to gain from the program, and who will be willing to “partner” with the program through co-op advertising and marketing efforts.

Approximate cost: Time

Funding: Local resident, business co-op effort

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #18: The primary and secondary market areas**

The primary market area for this effort should not include just the San Diego, Los Angeles area, but should include northern California: the Bay area, Sacramento, and other major population centers in central and northern California.

The secondary market should include Oregon (greater Portland metropolitan area), Washington (Seattle/Tacoma/Puget Sound region), Colorado (Denver metropolitan area), British Columbia (Vancouver region), and Alberta, Canada.

Finally, the public relations effort should concentrate on the Northwestern states (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, as well as British Columbia and Alberta), followed by a secondary market area of Colorado, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and other northern states.

One of the initial jobs of the public relations professional hired to promote Borrego Springs, will be to determine who goes to the Palm Springs, Death Valley, and Scottsdale, AZ areas - by month. The people who visit those areas, will also be interested in Borrego Springs - particularly foreigners - which can be marketed through cooperative efforts with State Tourism, San Diego ConVis and other local organizations that have reach into those areas.

Rationale:

Borrego Springs is located within a three-hour drive of more than 16 million residences - the largest metropolitan area in the United States. There is no question that this is Borrego Springs' primary market area - but the marketing effort MUST expand far beyond this area for several reasons:

1. The primary market includes millions who would only visit Borrego Springs as a day-trip, or for a one-night stay, whereas visitors coming from secondary market areas will stay much longer - usually three to six days.
2. Millions of visitors from the northern states and from foreign countries visit desert communities in California, Arizona and New Mexico for extended periods. Many are Snowbirds, but most are visitors who will stay for a week to a number of weeks.
3. Tens of thousands of visitors from around the world will visit Borrego Springs between June and September - just to experience the desert - just look at Death Valley where it's summer months are the peak season!

Approximate cost: Part of the marketing/PR program

Funding: Part of the PR program

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

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Recommendation #19: Marketing budgets, expenditures

We recommend that the Chamber of Commerce concentrate its efforts on marketing outside of the Borrego Springs valley and that it take a hard look at its budget allocations.

The 2001/2002 budget includes expenditures of \$177,450 to be used for operations, community development, and marketing. Of that, we recommend the following allocations:

• Events	10%	\$ 17,745
• Marketing, advertising, PR	60%	106,470
• Overhead, operations	30%	<u>53,235</u>
• Sub-total:		\$177,450

Note: Of the \$106,470 allocated for marketing, advertising and PR, this should include 70% of the director’s salary, taxes and benefits, because this job position should spend at least 70% of his or her time dedicated to marketing Borrego Springs - outside the community.

Another 20% would be dedicated to assisting visitors within the community (still very important), and only 10% managing the day-to-day affairs of the Chamber. Chamber board members should shoulder the load of “managing” the books and the organization so that this full-time person is dedicated to bringing visitors to Borrego Springs, and keeping them in the community for extended periods.

The Chamber should implement several committees:

- Marketing or Promotions Committee
- Events Committee
- Membership & Meetings Committee
- Finance Committee
- Vitalization Committee
- Packaging Committee to develop packages - a powerful marketing tool.
Packages should be showcased on the website.

The Marketing Committee is charged with marketing the community and working with subcontractors in making sure there’s a return on the investment. This is done by comparing lodging and retail revenues, requests for information via phone, walk-in customers and the website, etc.

The events committee would manage and produce Chamber events. In fact, we recommend that the Chamber only produce one or two events a year with a budget of perhaps \$10,000 (Borrego Days). The remaining \$7,745 could be split and donated to other organizations who are producing multi-day events that will draw visitors to the valley.

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The Membership & Meetings Committee should be charged with getting new members, keeping current members satisfied with the Chamber's activities, and should be charged with setting up and organizing Chamber meetings. Remember: Free up your Director's time so this vital person can concentrate on marketing the community.

The Finance Committee is charged with setting up annual budgets, producing and reviewing monthly income/expense statements, and in many cases, will actually pay the bills - once again, freeing up the Director's time.

A word about events

While events are very important to a community (people need things to do), it is very important that the Chamber's events are designed to encourage visitors to travel at least 50 miles to visit the community - and spend the night.

- Chamber events should be multi-day events.
- They should be marketed outside the community.
- They should be good enough and/or different enough that visitors will drive from other communities for the event.
- Other local organizations should be encouraged to develop, manage and produce community-oriented events. The Chamber, through its PR and marketing efforts, would help them promote the events.
- Events should work to become self-sufficient after a few years.

Here's how the existing budget stacks up, comparatively to the proposed new budget:

Events & local marketing:

2001/2002 budget: \$44,462 - (\$26,717 over budget)

Activities, coordinator costs, entertainment, instructors, judges, lodging, meals, parades, repairs and maintenance, security, supplies, transportation

Marketing, advertising, PR:

2001/2001 budget: \$68,573 - (\$37,897 under budget)

Postage, telephone, website hosting, distribution (brochures, CD), design services, advertising (\$13,168), publicity (\$6,000)

Overhead, operations:

2001/2002 budget: \$64,407 - (\$11,172 over budget)

Awards, prizes, gifts, community reinvestment, contract labor, dues and memberships, education, fixtures, furnishings, maintenance, 30% of full-time salary (including related costs), office expenses, accounting, legal, insurance, utilities, licenses, fees, permits, trash removal, etc.

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Marketing

Recommendations:

1. The overhead is too high and could be reduced by allocating the \$4,000 in “community reinvestment” to marketing which, in itself, reduces the “over budget” amount down to \$7,172. The Chamber should take a close look at the \$12,450 budgeted for “contract labor,” and some of the other expenses that could bring the overhead down to approximately 30% of the total budget.

The events and local marketing is where the Chamber needs to concentrate its reduction in expenditures the most. While providing activities for visitors is important, the nearly \$27,000 “over budget” amount would be much better utilized in marketing out of the valley, to bring visitors into the area. This amount, in itself, would be enough to launch an effective public relations program.

While Miss Borrego and other events are very good community events, they are designed for local residents and typically do not draw visitors from outside the area. It is very important that every dollar available be spent to bring visitors to Borrego Springs. Reducing the funds going to local events, and bringing the overhead costs down, will provide an additional \$38,000 a year for putting Borrego Springs on the map.

Finally, the marketing dollars currently allocated should be shifted to other uses with a better return on investment. For instance, nearly \$4,300 has been budgeted for distribution of the CD ROM, while only \$600 has been allocated for website hosting and updates. Likewise, only \$6,000 has been allocated for publicity and only \$13,000 for actual advertising. With regards to trade shows, \$4,125 has been budgeted. Are the shows consumer shows that will provide a solid return on the investment? Each item should be carefully scrutinized to determine its value in achieving the goal: bringing more people to Borrego Springs, extending the seasons, and getting the name out there.

An annual advertising and public relations budget of \$106,500 will greatly improve the community’s efforts in marketing the community, particularly if the Park will do its part (printing and distributing 150,000 of its annual publication). Finally, imagine the powerful program Borrego Springs would have if the local resorts cooperatively built a co-op advertising program. Borrego Springs, with a co-op program, should be able to double its marketing budget.

For instance, let’s say the community decided to run a 1/3 page ad in Sunset Magazine. The top half of the ad would be generic - promoting the Borrego Springs/State Park experience. The bottom half of the ad would list participating resorts and contact information, and they would pay for their share of the total cost giving the community much more presence, and selling the experience - and then the place to stay - in this instance.

Marketing

Rationale: Borrego Springs needs to spend as much funding as possible outside the immediate area so that the tens of millions of potential visitors living in the west will know the community and State Park exist as an alternative to the crowded urban areas of Palm Springs, and so they will know what the area has to offer.

With an effective, concentrated marketing effort in place, perhaps the County will see a worthy investment, and will perhaps increase funding on a regular basis - beyond the requests made in this Plan.

The PR professional, working with the Executive Director, should also work much more closely with the State Tourism office, San Diego ConVis, and other Convention & Visitors Bureaus in the county which currently do a very poor job of marketing Borrego Springs. This can be greatly remedied with a concentrated outreach effort.

Approximate cost: None. A reallocation of the annual budgets, re-focussing efforts on external marketing efforts.

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing**Recommendation #20: Tracking and measurables**

Implementing a marketing program is extremely important, but making sure it's effective is even more important. The following are some ways to track the success of your program:

- a. Check lodging revenues by month, quarter, or - at the least - annually. This can be done by reviewing state TOT summary reports. Compare to previous years, quarters or months to see if the season is expanding, and if revenues are increasing - as they should. Also compare to other communities to compare increases (Palm Springs, Julian, even San Diego).
- b. Check state sales tax reports to see how retail sales are doing in Borrego Springs compared to previous years or quarters.
- c. A traffic counter should be placed on the website's home page to identify the number of "unique" visitors to the site. Remember, you're interested in how many visitors went to the site, and not how many "hits" the site got. Every time a visitor clicks on their mouse while in the site, it is another "hit." You want to know how many visitors the site got, and compare it to previous months and previous years. There are counters available on the web that will send you a monthly report of how many people visited your site.
- d. A tally-sheet should be placed at the Chamber so that every time a visitor comes in (not a local resident or chamber member), a hash mark is tallied on the sheet to keep track of "walk-ins." Likewise, the tally sheet should have places for other hash marks by category. Every time a visitor comes in or calls, the Chamber volunteer or staff person should ask, "How did you hear about Borrego Springs?" The categories would include:
 - An article in the newspaper or magazine
 - The website
 - From friends or relatives
 - Been coming here for years
 - From ads or billboards
 - Referral from other visitor information center

These tally sheets should be kept and summarized every month. As numbers increase, you'll be demonstrating to your members and the County (who funds much of the program) that they are seeing a return on their investment.

Other questions that should be asked and tallied are: "Where are you from?" and "How long will you be in town?" This will let your marketing and PR professionals know who your primary market is and how long visitors are staying in the area.

- e. For events, consider bringing in college interns or students to randomly poll event attendees. Questions should include:

Recommendations

Marketing

- Are you here for this event?
- Do you have a home here in Borrego Springs?
- [If not] Where are you from?
- Did you come here because of the event?
- How long will you be staying in Borrego Springs?
- Any suggestions on what the community can do to make your stay even better?

These questions will let you know who's attending the event, how much pull it has for non-residents, how long it's keeping visitors in Borrego Springs, and will demonstrate a return on investment (or lack thereof).

Rationale:

Lodging Tax dollars (TOT funds) were implemented by the legislature for the “promotion and development of tourism.” These are NOT grant funds, they are economic development funds and the County should ALWAYS look for a return on its investment. Are the uses bringing visitors to Borrego Springs? Are they spending the night? Is the use of the funds actually promoting tourism in the community?

Overnight visitors to Borrego Springs are paying this tax. What are they getting for their money? The Activities Guide certainly provides an excellent tool for visitors, as do directional and interpretive signage. Having a decent map of the valley also provides them with a benefit, as does an informative website. Having a visitor information center (Chamber office and future kiosk in Christmas Circle) working around the clock also provides a benefit.

Based on this plan and recommendations, we urge the County to reinvest \$150,000 a year over the next three years (including current grant funding) - an increase of approximately \$65,000 a year (32% of the total funds collected from Borrego Springs visitors), back into the community for the implementation of the marketing and signage elements of this plan. We feel confident that with professional assistance, a dedicated local effort, sufficient funding, and implementation of this plan, that the County will see a substantial return on its investment within a few short years.

Putting Borrego Springs “on the map,” will also increase tourism throughout San Diego County: after all, nearly all foreign visitors and those from Northern California and other states throughout the U.S. and Canada, will visit Borrego Springs via San Diego. Borrego Springs will be a part of their San Diego experience - keeping visitors in the area for extended periods.

There is no reason why Borrego Springs and the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park cannot become a world-class draw and one of California's major tourism assets, with some investment by the County which totally holds the well-being and fate of this community

Marketing

in its hands.

Approximate cost: Time (tracking and measurables)

Funding: Part of the overall program

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce, overall funding of the program: San Diego County

Marketing

Recommendation #21: Volunteer Visitor Center assistance

We recommend that a group of volunteers be tapped to assist at the Chamber, so the Director is free to market the community outside of Borrego Springs.

The most successful Chambers/Visitor Information Centers are open 362 days each year, and are open from 9:00 am to 6:00 during the “shoulder seasons,” and have extended hours during the peak seasons including staying open until 7:00 on Friday evenings.

This can be facilitated with 11 or 12 volunteers who only work two, three or four-hour shifts each week. For instance:

Daily shifts: 9:00-12:00, 12:00-4:00, 3:00-6:00

Three volunteers per day times seven days equals 21 total shifts. If each volunteer worked two shifts, the Chamber would need 11 volunteers. Note that there is overlap between 3:00 and 4:00. This is for stuffing and mailing Activities Guides and other information requested during the day. This also allows one of the volunteers to run the materials to the post office.

Some may wish to work just one shift each week, some several shifts - perhaps three mornings each week. We have seen dozens of small communities of 3,000 or less people gather the necessary volunteers who do an excellent job of promoting the community. Volunteers can include local business people who may only work one shift a month - just to stay in touch with the visitors, they can include internships, Snowbirds, and local retired residents.

Volunteers should be enthusiastic about the community and tourism, have excellent telephone skills, have a “can do,” “what can we do to help?” attitude. Remember: The Chamber will be spending more than \$100,000 a year to market the community and its businesses: That entire effort will rely on the website, Activities Guide, and Chamber volunteers to “close the sale.” These volunteers should be top-notch sales people.

They do not necessarily have to be retired folks. It would be excellent if local business people (particularly those in the tourism industry), would take a two-hour shift once a week.

Rationale:

It is important to free-up chamber staff so that they can concentrate on marketing the community throughout the western U.S. and Canada. This is a big job and one that can't be successfully implemented in just a few hours a week or between phone calls and walk-in guests.

Marketing

Approximate cost: \$500 a year for a recognition dinner/banquet, plaques.

Funding: Chamber operational funds

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Marketing

Budgets and timelines

<u>2002 Program</u>	<u>Approximate cost</u>	<u>Funding/responsibility</u>
1. Logo in various formats	\$100	TOT grant - one time expense
2. Professional photo library.....	12,500	TOT grant - one time expense
3. Activities Guide	40,000	TOT grant - one time expense*
4. Color map	12,000	TOT grant - one time expense*
5. Press kit development.....	12,500	TOT grant - one time expense
6. Public relations program	15,000**	TOT grant - ongoing program
7. RFP for professional assistance	500	TOT grant - one time expense
8. Template print ads	3,500	TOT grant - one time expense
9. Park annual publication printing.....	----	State Park
10. Distribution program	5,000	TOT grant - ongoing program
11. Chamber exterior fixtures.....	1,500	TOT grant - one time expense
12. Website redesign	8,500	TOT grant - one time expense
Website updates (\$250 mo)	1,000	TOT grant - ongoing program
13. State Park marketing	----	State Park
14. Agricultural marketing	----	Agriculture industry co-op
15. Interpretive signage	12,000	TOT grant - one time expense
16. Merchant signage	500	TOT grant - one time expense
16. Marketing committee.....	----	Chamber of Commerce
17. Primary/secondary markets	----	Chamber of Commerce
18. Budget recommendations	----	Chamber of Commerce
Overhead (30% of average budget)	54,000	
Event promotion (10%)	18,000	
Advertising.....	30,000	
19. Total 2002 projects:	\$213,600	

TOT funding: Typically, the chamber operates within a \$175,000 annual budget, of which approximately \$85,000 is received as a TOT grant. Because there are approximately \$112,000 in initial “start-up” marketing costs (a good portion of the \$124,600 listed above), we recommend that the Chamber seek \$150,000 in TOT grants: a total increase of \$65,000: \$30,000 to assist with the marketing effort and \$35,000 for the first phase of the signage plan - discussed later.

*Except for reprint costs, minor updates

** \$2,500 per month retainer - 6 months in 2002, \$30,000 for 2003 (12 month program)

Marketing

2003 Program

20. Public relations program	\$30,000	TOT grant - ongoing program
21. Website updates (\$250 mo.)	3,000	Chamber funds -ongoing program
22. Color map reprints.....	2,400	Chamber funds -annual expense
23. Distribution program	7,000	Chamber funds -annual expense
24. Advertising placement	35,000	TOT grant - ongoing program
25. Professional advertising assistance	4,500	TOT grant/Chamber funds - ongoing expense
26. Events	18,000	TOT grant - ongoing events
Overhead (30% of budget)	54,000	
Events (10%)	17,500	
Discretionary	4,000	

Total 2003 program: \$175,400

In the second, and ongoing years, the budget would follow along the lines of the above, utilizing an annual TOT grant of approximately \$85,000 (the amount already awarded the Chamber in 2001). This does not include the printing of 150,000 State Park tabloids to be distributed throughout the state. That is an expense we would like the Park to include in its budget, or to come from other funding sources with the Park's assistance.

The Chamber would also apply for an additional \$65,000 (a total community grant of \$150,000), to implement the signage program (construction).

Notes:

3. Activities Guide: Should provide enough copies to last through 2003. If funding became available as of July 1, 2002, the project would most likely not be completed and printed until mid-October, 2002. A reduction in the printing or production cost of the Activites Guide would provide the funding to redesign and print the Rack Card teaser.

20. Professional public relations assistance at \$2,500 per month for the 12 month period.

24. Ad placement (media) to be determined. Once major capital projects have been facilitated (primarily signage), the ad budget would increase to between \$40,000 and \$50,000 annually.

25. Professional advertising assistance covers the cost of placing the media, creating the actual ads, and submitting them for placement.

Marketing

Chamber of Commerce to-do list:

October, 2001

1. Create a heavy-hitting, effective, “get something done” Marketing Committee for the Chamber. Folks that can contribute expertise and perhaps funding for a co-op program next year.
2. Contact the San Diego Film Commission, who is in the midst of updating their resource guide, and provide them with any and all information they need. This is important. (See additional information and contact information on Page 172 of this plan).

October, 2001

3. Review the current budget, making adjustments wherever possible so that some of these recommendations can begin implementation before July of 2002.

November, 2001

4. Begin the fundraising and lobbying effort to make sure you can get the funding from TOT funds, and for the marketing the State Park (tabloid, assistance with the Activities Guide, etc.). Get letters of support from State Tourism, Economic Development organizations, local elected officials, etc.

Work with local organizations and convince them to hold off on all TOT funding requests for 24 months so these “foundation” things can be developed without competing for the funds. The competition for the same funds usually results in less funding for everyone. This sales effort, is the most important part of this entire plan. It ALWAYS comes down to money, and without the funding, this plan cannot be implemented effectively within the timelines outlined herein.

November/December, 2001

5. Optional: Develop a Request for Qualifications for advertising, marketing, creative services, and public relations services. If you need samples to work from, please contact CB&D. Ask for County assistance in how and where to publish the RFQ. Also do some homework: find the best tourism marketing firms in the western U.S. and send them the RFQ.
6. Work to further develop the Chamber front landscape, and see if local volunteers (master craftsperson) would develop exterior displays for the Chamber. Get costs, and if the budget allows, get a permanent sign for the Chamber along with a second building sign stating that visitor information is available 24 hours a day.
7. Begin working with the agricultural community by encouraging them to create a marketing co-op and bring them into the marketing program. Also foster co-op market-

Marketing

ing relationships with local resorts, golf courses, and other businesses that can benefit from a greatly improved and stepped up program.

January/February, 2002

8. Once you select a firm (or firms), have them provide estimates for the various projects outlined in this plan. If you are not satisfied with those estimates, ask the runner-up for estimates so you can compare the two and make a final decision.

February/March, 2002

9. Develop an advertising program. Get assistance from your ad professional. This year is a “getting ready” year with many capital (onetime) costs and so the advertising should be kept to a minimum, unless funding becomes available. Concentrate on the PR effort instead.

March, 2002

10. Present the plan and request to the County for funding. Keep marketing separate from the other recommendations (which would be presented by the Chamber’s Vitalization Group).

November, 2001 through August, 2002

11. Begin development of the photo library. Contact photographers, state tourism office and other organizations that may have photography you can use to promote Borrego Springs.

12. Begin gathering information for the press kit, including development of a database of articles already run about Borrego Springs and the State Park.

November, 2001 through February, 2002

13. Begin to develop marketing partnerships with local merchants, resorts/accommodations, ConVis, etc.

May, 2002

14. Develop the database of Visitor Information Centers for distribution of the upcoming Activities Guide.

June, 2002

15. Once funding is announced, rework the Chamber budget accordingly (hopefully, you won’t have to), and begin implementation of the program. Fast-track everything so you can get some benefit for the upcoming peak season.

NOTE: In the Supporting Documentation section of this plan there are several articles and some additional reading that further support the effort.

- Death Valley article
- Pushing a Car

Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding



While the marketing effort will bring visitors to Borrego Springs, providing those visitors with a variety of activities will keep them longer. Signage is a major issue and one that must be addressed in order for Borrego Springs to become a quality destination.

Borrego Springs is one of the most poorly signed communities in the country - both in terms of welcome signage, the rampant off-premise sales signage, and the total lack of directional signage.

Additionally, there are only two signs on state and county highways within 50 miles of Borrego Springs that even mention the words “Borrego Springs” or “Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.”

Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Introduction

Section 6200 of the San Diego County Code calls for “the establishment of a comprehensive system for the regulation of off-premise signage throughout the county. It is intended that these standards would impose reasonable standards on the number, size, height, and location of off-premise signs, and would allow for the removal or replacement of nonessential off-premise signing.”

The following signage recommendations include the removal of 73 public and private signs which would be replaced by a total of 37 new signs. Of the 37 new signs, eight are entrance signs (two at each “entrance” to the valley - across the street from each other). The remaining 29 signs will be directional signs patterned after the sign developed and installed by the Palms at Indian Head (below).

While the Palms sign is one-sided, new signage would be two sided with directionals on both sides, and at entrance points would state “Thank you for visiting Borrego Springs.”



The total cost of the project is approximately \$185,000, of which local businesses would be asked to pay 50% (\$100,000 which gives a small contingency fund). The remaining 50% would be funded as part of the \$150,000 two-year TOT request. \$35,000 would be available the first year (2002/2003) for the design, engineering, permitting and implementation of the program, and \$65,000 would be available in the second year for construction and placement of the signs. These two figures total \$100,000.

Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #22: Professional services

We recommend that the Vitalization Group, under the Chamber of Commerce, hire or seek pro-bono professional services to develop the specific signage program which would include the following elements:

1. Actual engineering drawings and design of the directional signage
2. Engineering and design of the entrance signage
3. Exact placement for each sign
4. Exact text, mileage, directional arrows on each
5. Review of county right-of-way distances for placement
6. Assistance in getting permits for the new signage
7. Construction RFP assistance
8. Management of the construction contract
9. Manage sign removal program with local businesses, county road dept.

To accomplish the above scope of work, using local volunteer assistance wherever possible, will cost approximately \$35,000 to be paid from the TOT funding request. Once this work has been done, the community will need to seek assistance from local businesses for implementation of the plan, raising approximately \$100,000 for construction of the 37 new signs.

No more than four or five locations can be listed on each sign, and so this will take some careful study to make sure the wayfinding represents the major assets, attractions, and amenities in Borrego Springs.

Rationale:

While this Plan makes the basic recommendations for a signage program, it does not include the actual construction drawings, exact locations for each sign, and the exact text to be placed on each. The directional signs will need better engineering drawings and specifications than currently exist for the Palms at Indian Head sign - as they will be two-sided, and there may be additional cost savings considering there will be 29 of them. Likewise, the entrance signs (which will be different), need to be designed and engineered.

Approximate cost: \$35,000

Funding: Transient Occupancy Tax grant (year one)

Responsibility: Borrego Springs Vitalization Group

Signage and wayfinding**Recommendation #23: Establishment of guidelines, codes**

It is our recommendation that a new sign code (with design standards) be developed specifically for Borrego Springs that would accommodate the recommendations made in this plan. Furthermore, we recommend that the County establish a system for the removal of privately owned off-premise signs (ALL) with no allowable variances.

Rationale:

From a visitor's perspective, Borrego Springs looks like the wild west of signage without regulation - a free-for-all of sorts. Borrego Springs probably holds the record for the number of off-premise marketing signs per capita of any community in the country. Most of the signs are dated, in various states of disrepair, or are just plain cheap. Virtually all of them degrade the appeal of the community, and do little to help visitors navigate throughout the valley.

There are more than 100 individual signage recommendations made on the following pages with the net result of the elimination of 73 signs and the placement of 29 new directional signs and eight entrance signs (both sides of the highway at all four entrances into the valley). The result will be approximately 30 fewer signs than now exist, better wayfinding, signage that fits the community architecturally and environmentally, and will still do an excellent job of promoting the large-scale resort developments that are the biggest culprits to the proliferation of marketing signs.

Approximate cost: San Diego County planning staff : costs to be determined

Funding: San Diego County

Responsibility: San Diego County planning department

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #24: Identifying organizations

As part of the code, it will be important to determine which private businesses will be allowed placement on the directional signage - which should be limited to the major resorts with public amenities. Guidelines should be set up to only include private developments that are open to the public in terms of golf, tennis and/or resort lodging. With regards to lodging, only those properties with a certain number of rooms (and open year round) would be allowed placement on the directional signage.

Additionally, the properties identified will need to contribute to the cost of the signage at approximately 50% of the cost of each sign.

The following are recommended attractions and amenities which should be included on the directional signage:

Public assets:

- Visitor information (directionals to the Chamber)
- Town Circle/Public restrooms
- Airport
- Lodging/dining
- Local churches (pointing to Church circle)
- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitors Center
- Borrego Desert Nature Center
- Medical clinic

Private attractions/developments:

- La Casa Del Zorro Resort
- Rams Hill/Golf
- Borrego Springs Resort/Golf
- Palm Canyon Resort/RV park
- Road Runner Golf & Country Club (if golf is open to the public)
- Golf

Others will be identified by the Vitalization Group

Attractions signed from Town Circle:

- Agricultural tour route
- Performing arts center

Rationale: Because each sign can only include four or five places, it will be important to restrict the number of qualifying businesses.

Approximate cost: Vitalization Group working with County staff so this recommendation can become part of the signage code. Approximate cost to be determined.

Funding: None required

Responsibility: Borrego Springs Vitalization Group/Chamber of Commerce

Signage and wayfinding**Recommendation #25: Funding pool**

The tricky part of the signage recommendation will be in developing a “signage pool:” the private funding used in development of the new directional signs. If each sign has five locations listed, only two will be allowed for private use on each side of the double sided signs. If two businesses are listed on each of the 29 directional signs (times two sides for a total of 58 signs), and if each sign costs \$3,500 to develop and construct,* then the cost for each placement would be approximately \$800. This is figured from the total private investment of \$92,500 (half the total cost of the project) divided by 116 private business listings (two per sign, per side, times 29 signs).

So, for instance, if Ram’s Hill/Golf were listed 12 times, their total participation would be \$9,600.

*Noted earlier was an average signage cost of \$5,000 per sign - which incorporated the cost of the entrance signs. The entrance signs will most likely cost nearly \$10,000 apiece, while the directional signs will cost approximately \$3,500 each.

The Chamber of Commerce would set up a trust account, and once the final design and text has been determined for each sign, participating businesses would be billed and the funds put into the trust account along with the TOT grant funding (the other 50%) so that a contractor can be hired to develop and install the signs.

Rationale: Because this is a public/private partnership, developing a pool will be very important to make sure the contractor, who will build and install the signs, will be paid timely. Additionally, this will ensure participation before the signs are actually printed.

Approximate cost: None

Funding: None required

Responsibility: Borrego Springs Chamber/Vitalization Group

Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #26: Signage ownership/variances

Once the new directional and entrance signs have been put in place, it is unlikely that the county will take the responsibility of ownership and upkeep of the signs. These signs do not conform to typical county signage and so the signs would be owned by the Chamber of Commerce, and would have to be maintained locally. It is certainly worth approaching the county for some financial assistance for ongoing maintenance - up to the level they might typically allocate for the community.

Maintenance of the signs would have to be paid for by an annual “assessment” and billed to the participating businesses. This assessment program would be developed by the Chamber with assistance from the businesses and organizations who benefit from the signs.

We also recommend that no more roadside signage variances be allowed.

Rationale: Because the signs will be placed on County right-of-way, it is important that the County own the signs. Additionally, the County will be charged with signage enforcement of the newly developed sign code.

By not allowing future variances for private signage, Borrego Springs will not risk hurting its “image” and appeal and will not risk opening the door to future sign clutter.

Approximate cost: Unknown

Funding: None required

Responsibility: San Diego County

Signage and wayfinding**Recommendation #27: Removal program of existing signs**

We recommend that 73 existing signs be removed. Most of these signs are privately owned and most are off-premise signs. Many signs, however, are actually located on or adjacent to the property being promoted and those not placed on county right-of-way would also need to be removed as part of this program.

Removal of these 73 signs would be on a voluntary basis. Approximately 60 of these signs are privately owned and most belong to Rams Hill, Borrego Springs Resort, the Galleria, and La Casa Del Zorro. The new directional signage program should not be implemented until commitments have been made by the owners of these signs that they will be removed once the new directional signs are in place.

Removal of these 73 signs is not a part of the budget and all would be removed voluntarily by their owners.

Rationale: It is very important to get commitments from the owners of the private signs before the new directional signage program is implemented, so that the community can be assured that there will be a net reduction in overall signage. The last thing the community wants is placement of another 37 signs in addition to the existing signs.

We believe the existing private and off-premise signs do little to promote the serene nature of Borrego Springs, and do little to actually promote the individual developments. Most of the signs are dated, faded, in various states of disrepair, or do a very poor job of showcasing the development.

Because many of these signs are located on private property (as opposed to being located on the County right-of-way), this program will be largely voluntary. Many signs (such as the Galleria) have been grandfathered in, or have received variances. Voluntary removal of these signs will be mandatory in the development of the signage program.

Approximate cost: By individual owners

Funding: By individual owners

Responsibility: Individual owners, County (for removal of county signs), and Vitalization Group for management of the removal program.

Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #28:

We recommend the placement of entrance signs along each of the four county roadways entering the Borrego Springs valley. All four locations (identified throughout the following pages) are not within the State Park boundaries.



Recommendation #29:

The 29 new directional signs should be designed along the line of the sign shown below with some modifications. The text and background colors should be more contrasting so the sign is easier to read in non-daylight hours. Additionally, this sign is only single sided and the new signs should be double sided to provide directionals and information when seen from both directions.



It is not necessary that this exact design be put in place, and the hired landscape architect or signage designer may come up with a nicer design that could be developed and constructed saving additional funds. What we are hoping to avoid in this program, is the placement of six foot high, county aluminum signs which are unsightly and do a poor job of representing the community's unique setting.



Recommendations

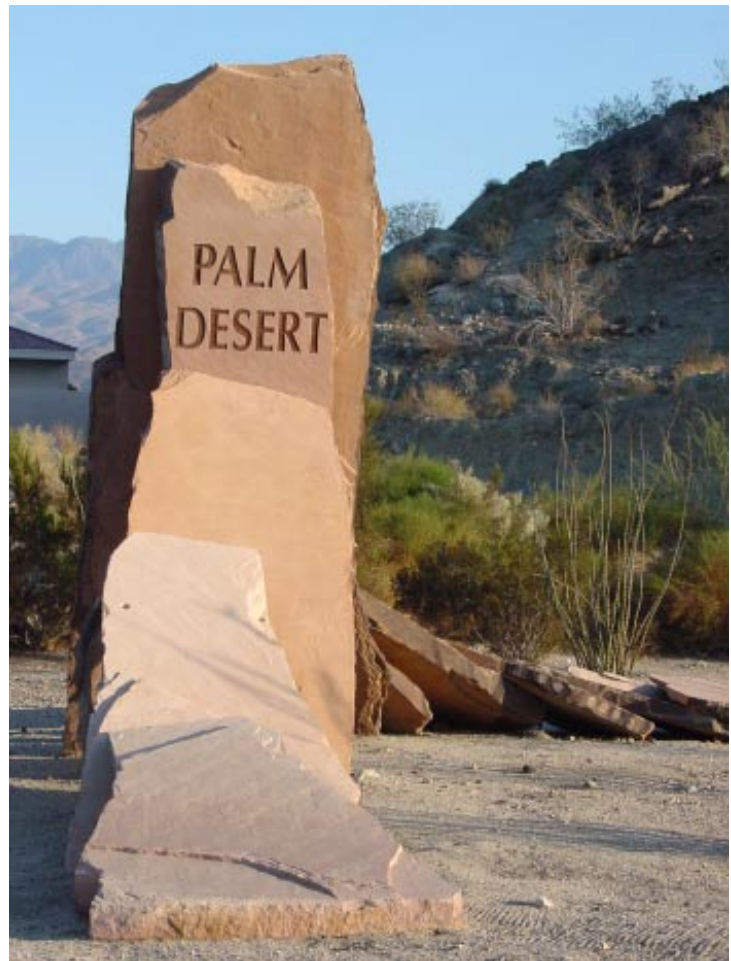
Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #30:

Special attention should be placed on the design of the entrance signs. Each sign should simply state “Welcome to Borrego Springs.” The reverse side of each sign should read “Thank you for visiting Borrego Springs.” No directions or other information should be included on these entrance signs.

At each entrance point, the signs should be placed on both sides of the road, and should be tastefully designed to fit the community’s desert decor. Native landscaping should be placed around each sign. Signage that might serve as a basis for the entrance signage design would include the Palm Desert sign (below), the Borrego Valley Inn sign, or the etched deAnza Country Club sign.

We have estimated the cost for each entrance at \$10,000 (\$5,000 per sign on each side of the road). The total entrance signage budget makes up \$40,000 of the total \$185,000 project budget.



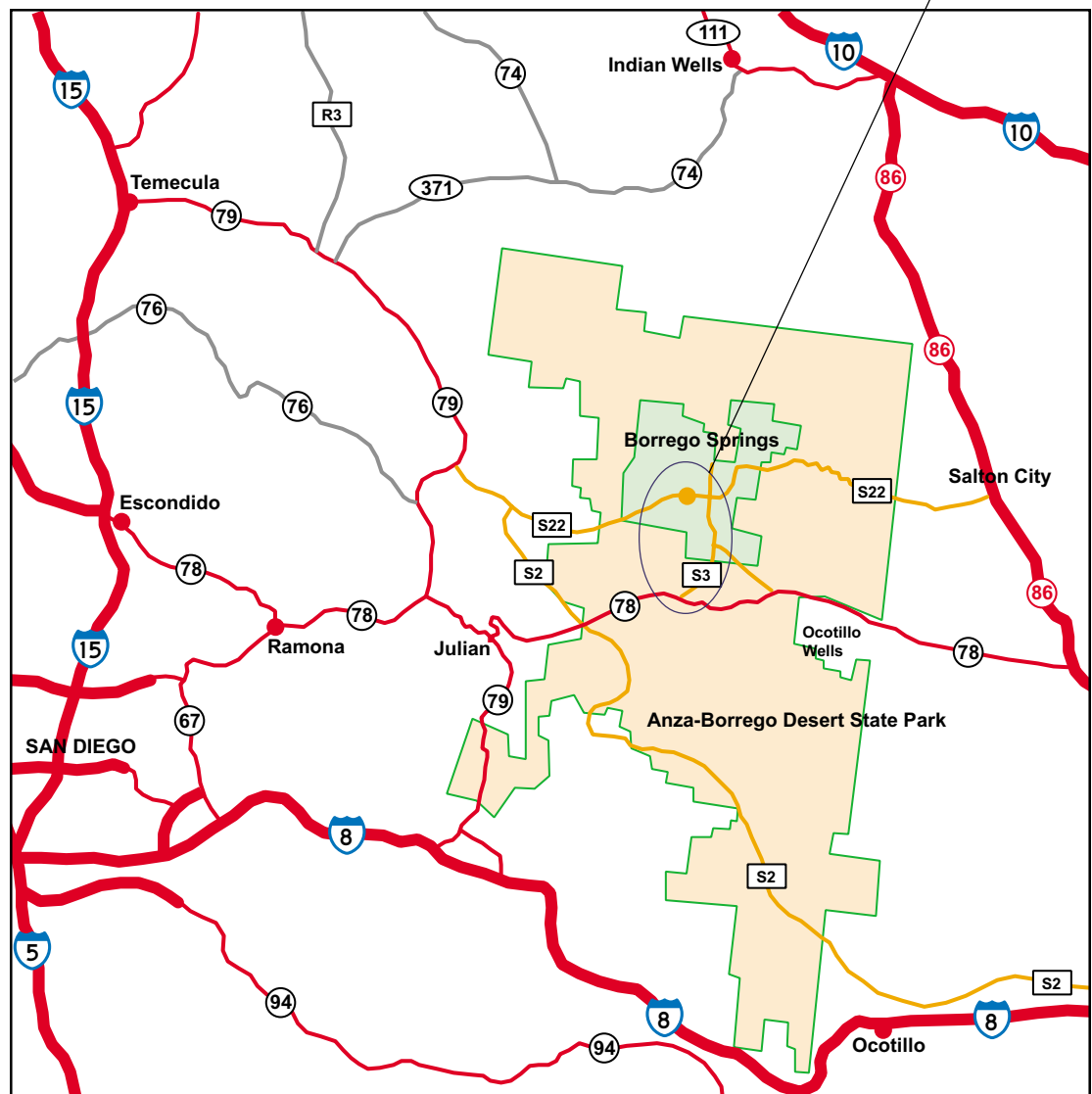
Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

There are four primary entrance-ways, if you will, to Borrego Springs and the following recommendations will be detailed by county road from the entrances into the valley to Christmas Circle as follows:

- Yaqui Pass Road (S3)
- S22 westbound from Hwy. 86
- S22 eastbound (Montezuma Grade)
- Borrego Springs Road from Hwy. 78

This first section will detail recommendations from Yaqui Pass Road where it “enters” the valley approximately a mile south of Rams Hill, to Christmas Circle.



Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #31:

The photo (below) shows the approximate location for entrance signage to Borrego Springs. The entrance signs should be placed where the “first impression” is grand and showcases the entire valley, as does this location heading north down Yaqui Pass.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #32:

Just north of the entrance signs, should be the first of the directional signs, in this case, directly adjacent to the water tower. This sign should identify the following community attractions and should include mileage to each:

- Visitor information
- Town Circle
- Las Casa del Zorro
- Rams Hill

Additional signage as visitors enter the valley will identify other attractions and amenities such as:

- Lodging/dining
- Airport
- Medical facilities
- Other resorts/golf



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #33:

Remove first, second and third Rams Hill signs. These signs are faded, paint a poor image of Rams Hill, and create sign clutter - one of the things potential Rams Hill residents will be looking to avoid. Otherwise, they'd move to communities in the Palm Springs area. It's important for Borrego Springs to set itself apart from these urban desert communities, and the proliferation of these signs does a poor job of doing so.

While these signs, for the most part, are actually on-premise signs, we are hopeful that Rams Hill's new ownership will voluntarily remove these signs once the new directional signs have been put in place.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #34:

This particular sign is ok and can stay where and as is. Overall, we are hoping to remove many of this type of aluminum sign, but in identifying emergency services (such as this medical facility), this type of sign is appropriate.



Recommendation #35:

This sign would be removed and replaced with one of the community directional signs that might include text as follows:

- Ram's Hill Resort Community (arrow to the right)
- Championship golf course (public welcome) - (arrow)
- Lodging/dining/shopping (# miles)
- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Interpretive Center (# miles)



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #36:

This type of sign is typically located at the city limits. Since Borrego Springs is not an incorporated city, this sign is not needed and just adds to the sign clutter. With the development of new welcome signage, this sign is no longer needed. Instead, at Christmas (or Town) Circle, directional signage could include the population and elevation.



Recommendation #37:

This sign should be removed and replaced with a community directional sign. The reverse side (leaving town) could include mileage to Julian and San Diego.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #38:

At the entrance to Ram's Hill, is a perfect opportunity to place a development specific entrance sign which could be placed in the median stating "Welcome to Rams Hill Golf & Country Club" followed by "Public welcome."



Recommendation #39:

Remove this sign, which simply creates sign clutter and is in poor condition. The new directional signage does far more to promote Ram's Hill than does this collection of dated and faded signs.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #40:

This sign should also be removed. It is not a directional sign, offers little information, is hard to read, and is placed next to a residence which leaves visitors wondering if the residence is the resort or leaves them wondering where the resort actually is. Prior directional signage will identify the resort.



Recommendation #41:

This sign would be removed and replaced by the new community directional signage which could include:

- Airport (# miles)
- Town Circle (arrow)
- Anza Borrego Desert State Park Interpretive Center
- La Casa del Zorro (next right)

The highway (S3) sign could be mounted adjacent to the directional sign.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #42:

The following sign is located at the intersection of Yaqui Pass and Deep Well Roads. We recommend that this sign be removed immediately. While volunteers should be commended for trying to assist the community by developing the sign, it does little to promote Borrego Springs and, in fact, actually degrades the community. The community will actually have more appeal with no signage at this location - thus the immediate removal.

We recommend that the Vitalization Group get a few volunteers and remove the sign, saving the auxiliary signs which should be mounted on a pole in Christmas Circle along with meeting dates and times for each.



Over time, a new directional sign would be placed at this intersection and might include the following text:

- Anza-Borrego State Park (left arrow)
- Shopping - dining - lodging (left arrow)
- Visitor information/public restrooms (left arrow)
- Airport (straight arrow)

Recommendation #43:

This sign is located on Deep Well southbound and should be removed. Rams Hill will be identified in this area on community directional signage.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

At the intersection of Deep Well and Borrego Springs Road there is no signage.

Recommendation #44:

A community directional sign should be added at this important intersection. It should read:

- Town circle/public restrooms
- Visitor information
- Lodging - dining - shopping
- Anza-Borrego State Park Interpretive Center



Recommendation #45:

Located on Borrego Springs Road (facing eastbound traffic), this sign should be removed.



Signage and wayfinding

Located on Borrego Springs Road (facing eastbound traffic)

Recommendation #46:

This county sign should be removed and replaced with a new community directional sign. The sign would include Rams Hill, eliminating the need for the sign in the background (in photo and on previous page). The County S3 sign should be mounted adjacent to the new directional sign.



Recommendation #47:

Located on Borrego Springs Road (facing westbound traffic), this sign should be removed. Ram’s Hill will be easily identified on new community directional signage.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

End of Tilting T Drive at the Borrego Springs Resort.

Recommendation #48:

This sign needs to be replaced with a much improved sign along the lines of the other community directional signs, but should be considerably smaller. The sign would be specific to the Resort and would be paid for, in its entirety, by the resort. These wood signs, in many regards, “cheapen” the resort - making it seem second class. Also, the litter around the sign should be removed and the area cleaned up. This presents a poor “first impression.”



Location: Near the end of Tilting T Drive.

Recommendation #49:

Once again, a new sign fitting the new design standards should replace this sign. The sign would be specific to the resort and therefore, paid for by the resort. This sign, like the previous one, paints a “second-class” picture of the resort. Checkout time should not be on the sign and should be posted in each unit as opposed to being placed on signage geared to making a sale.



Signage and wayfinding

Location: Facing southbound on Yaqui Pass just north of Palm Canyon Drive

Recommendation #50:

This sign should be replaced with a community directional sign that would include the same text plus other directional/resort text. The County S3 sign would be mounted adjacent to the sign.



Recommendation #51:

Location: Borrego Springs Road just north of Tilting T (facing southbound traffic) - This sign should be removed. It paints a very poor image of the community - and the Galleria. Additionally, the Galleria has not been open for some time, and retail businesses should be required to locate in the commercially zoned area. We understand that these signs are “grandfathered” in, but should, nonetheless, be removed - hopefully voluntarily. The Galleria, if it should reopen, would not be included on new directional signage as it’s in a residentially zoned area.



Signage and wayfinding

Location: Borrego Springs Road where it intersects with Christmas Circle.

Recommendation #52:

This is an ideal location for a new community directional sign that would include the following text:

- Visitor information (right arrow)
- Shopping - dining - lodging (arrows both directions)
- Airport (right arrow)
- Public restrooms (straight ahead)
- Anza-Borrego State Park Interpretive Center (left arrow)

The S3 and S22 signs would be placed adjacent to the directional signage. The word “End” should be reduced to half its current size.



Recommendation #53:

All around Christmas Circle, are spokes (almost like a compass) with median triangles.

These triangle should be landscaped with low growth native landscape materials. At first glance they seem barren and should be more densely landscaped.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #54:

Christmas Circle at end of S2: This is an ideal location for a major directional sign or kiosk that would list local businesses (much like you'd see at a mall) by type (dining, lodging, entertainment, retail, etc.). This would also be a great location for a pole with local auxiliaries listed (Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.) and should also include meeting dates, times and location. This sign would be one that would be read by pedestrians, as opposed to one read from moving vehicles.

The sign would sit back from the road approximately 12' but would have a header (banner) that might read: "Visitor Information."



The sign could also include (on the back side) a map of the valley showing key attractions including agricultural interpretive signage locations.

Recommendation #55:

Location: Borrego Springs Road at Christmas Circle. This sign is located next to the newspaper office and should be removed. The resort will be identified on other community directional signs placed at each intersection to Christmas (Town) Circle.



Recommendation #56: Deep Well Road and Christmas Circle. There needs to be a small reminder sign (six mile stretch) stating: Town Circle - 3 miles.

Signage and wayfinding

This section: Yaqui Pass road north beginning at Borrego Springs Road (La Casa)

Recommendation #57:

Location: .2 miles from intersection. This sign should be replaced by a community directional sign with the following text:

- Lodging - dining - shopping
- Town Circle/public restrooms
- Visitor information
- Airport (5)
- [one of the resorts]



Recommendation #58:

Location: .5 miles from intersection. This sign should be removed. Community directional signage will easily identify where Borrego Springs Resort is. The directional signage could read "Borrego Springs Resort/Estates."



Signage and wayfinding

Note Yaqui Pass Road after curve (1.7) turns into Borrego Valley Road

Recommendation #59:

Location: 2.2 miles from the intersection at the entrance to Borrego Springs Resort. The resort is already easily identifiable at this location, and the additional signage is not necessary and is confusing. The resort is promoting the resort, estates, rental condos, and golf which is confusing to visitors. This sign should be removed.



Recommendation #60:

The wood sign (to the right) should be removed. It is not necessary and devalues the entrance to the resort and the resort's value. It also includes far too much text.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #61:

This sign should also be removed. For one, it's after the fact and states "turn here" a couple of blocks after the turn.



Recommendation #62:

This particular sign is facing southbound traffic and is an on-premise sign, set approximately 75 feet from the roadway. It should be replaced with a much nicer monument sign that will much more effectively promote the resort. The sign could be replaced by a community directional sign and placed next to the roadway and would include the text:

- Borrego Springs Resort/Estates (next right)



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #63 & #64:

Location: 3.8 miles from the intersection. This sign should be removed and a community directional sign put in its place. Christmas Circle should be referred to as “Town Circle” so visitors will know where the “town” is. Christmas Circle means nothing to first-time visitors. If the “real” history of the circle can be confirmed, perhaps an interpretive sign at the circle could be developed explaining its history and name.



Recommendation #65:

Location: Near the intersection of Palm Canyon Road. This sign should be removed. New directional signage (above) would be used instead, just prior to the intersection. The S22 sign can remain where it is adjacent to the stop sign.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #66:

Location: At intersection of Henderson Canyon and Borrego Valley. While this is a nice sign, the business is not open to the public, and so the sign should be removed or reduced to approximately half the current size.



Recommendation #67:

These signs should be removed. They are tacky, do little to promote Seley Reds, and point to places that are not open to the public. Fruit stands would be identified at Christmas Circle and at agricultural tour interpretive signs. A better solution to these signs would be to place sandwich board signs during fruit stand open hours, and removed when the stands are closed.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #68:

We recommend that an agricultural tour be developed with interpretive signage placed at key locations throughout the valley. This would be an ideal location for a directional sign pointing to agricultural attractions (dates, grapefruit, lemons, palm growers, etc.).



Recommendation #69:

This sign should be removed as the site is not open to the public. This might be a good site for a community directional sign directing visitors back to Town Circle, Airport, lodging, dining, shopping and other attractions.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #70:

We recommend that all directional signage placed in the county right-of-way be removed when the business is not open to the public. This type of signage should be relocated to the actual entrance and placed on the private property.



Recommendation #71:

This would be an ideal location for interpretive signage about the Seley Ranch. Signs state closed to the public, yet we found directional signage throughout this area of the valley directing visitors to this location. Is it ever open to the public? If so, when? All Seley signage should be replaced with attractive signage that will help them promote their products. This and other similar signs are a poor reflection of the product.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Next recommendations:

Henderson Canyon Road westbound starting at Borrego Valley Road.

Recommendation #72:

Location: At end of intersection of DiGiorgio and Henderson Canyon

We applaud the idea of free samples, but this sign is one of the tackiest signs in the valley and should be replaced by an attractive interpretive sign. Also, the owner of the free samples should state “Free samples courtesy of Seley Farms.” (If that’s who owns these trees). The interpretive sign should state the peak seasons, the type of grapefruit grown here, and other interesting information about the industry.

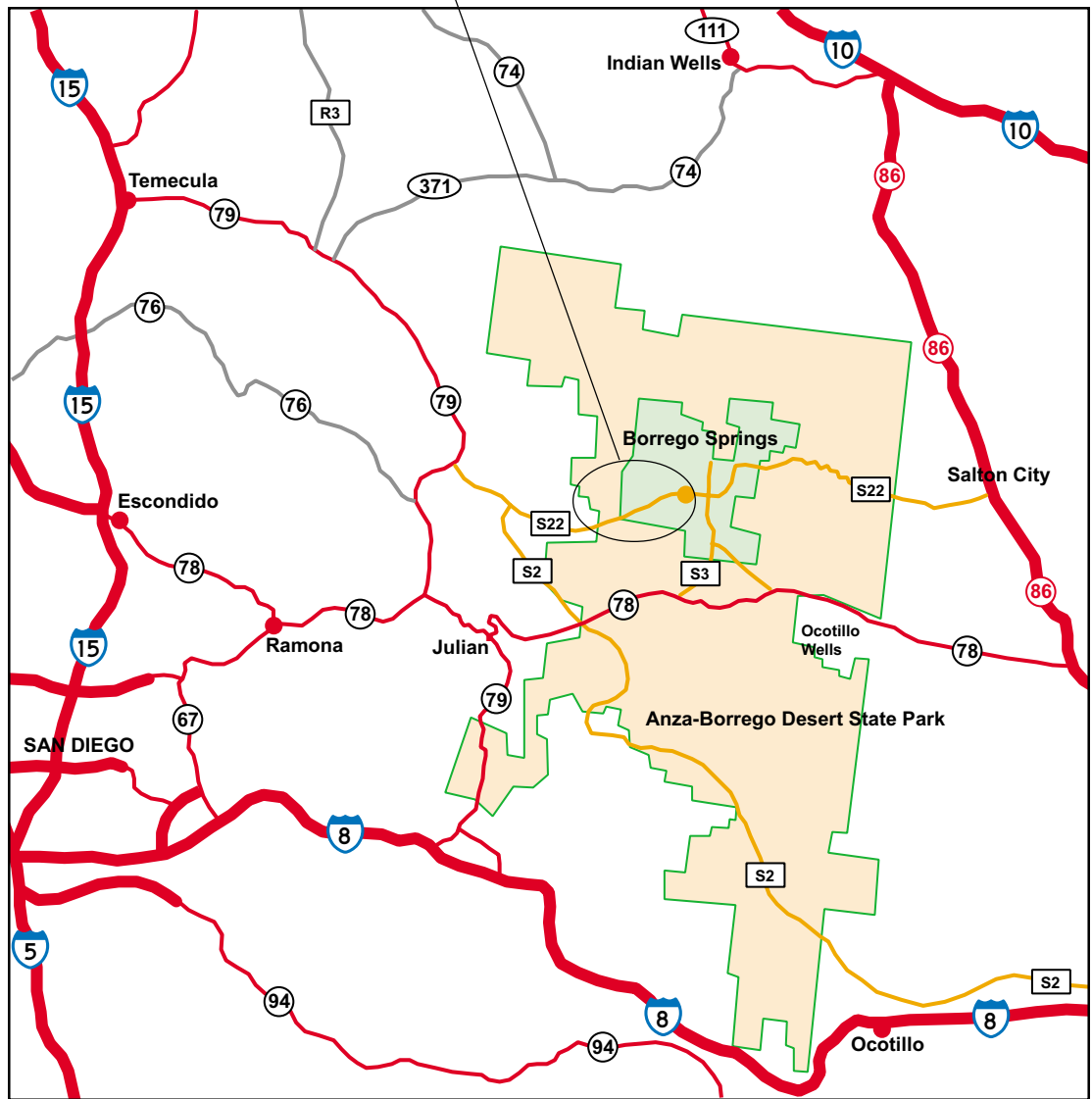
We noted the word “dates” on the sign but could find no date trees anywhere in the vicinity.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

This next section includes recommendations for signage along S22 (Montezuma Grade).



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #73:

This sign should be removed as soon as possible. The auxiliary signs should be relocated to Christmas Circle or returned to the auxiliary. We've already recommended their signs be removed from the Yaqui Pass location and posted at the Circle along with meeting days, times, and location.

While this sign should be removed immediately, the location is ideal for the placement of new entrance signs to Borrego Springs. The first entrance signs to be installed, should be placed here.



Recommendation #74:

This sign should be removed immediately as well. The Road Runner Club will be identified on other community directional signage. The sign, while somewhat attractive, does not fit the character of the community, and adds to the sign clutter.



Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #75:

This sign should be removed. It will be replaced with new community directional signage, and references to population and elevation will be available at kiosk signage at Christmas Circle.



Recommendation #76:

This is one of the tackier signs in the valley and devalues the Palm Canyon Resort. Other resort signage is very nice and this one erases the value of the other signs. This sign should be removed. The resort will be identified on community directional signage located within 100' or so of this location.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #77:

We recommend that these two signs (top two photos) be combined into one nice community directional sign that would state:

- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Visitors Center (left arrow)
- Town Circle (right arrow)
- Shopping - dining - lodging (right arrow)
- Visitor Information (right arrow)*

* While the State Park also offers Visitor Information, the directional should point to the Chamber which is open on a year round basis.



This is an ideal location for the new community directional sign detailed above.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #78:

This is an ideal location for a community directional sign (at the entrance road to the State Park headquarters - Palm Canyon Drive and Hoberg). The sign would state:

- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Interpretive Center
- State Park headquarters
- State Park campground, RV park
- Palm Canyon Trail
- Desert Tours information



Recommendation #79:

The sign (to the left) should also include Palm Canyon Trail. The trail, a popular attraction, is virtually impossible to locate unless visitors meander throughout the campground until they find it. Most of the public assets here are very difficult to find and are poorly signed.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Location: Palm Canyon Drive eastbound from the intersection of S22

Recommendation #80:

This sign should be removed and replaced with a community directional sign with the following text:

- Town Circle/public restrooms (straight ahead arrow)
- Visitor Information (arrow)
- Borrego Desert Nature Center
- Shopping - dining - lodging (arrow)
- La Casa del Zorro (# miles)



Recommendation #81:

This particular sign should be replaced by a much larger, nicer sign that also explains that the Visitors Center is underground and to follow the pathway adjacent to the parking area. We encountered dozens of visitors who were unable to find the center.



Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #82:

This is an ideal location for a sign showing the directions to the Visitors Center (follow the pathway).



Recommendation #83:

While this information kiosk is nicely built and in a good location, the displays need to be redesigned, much better organized, and easier to read. A more attractive appearance would be easier to read. Use bullets, larger fonts, etc.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #84:

There is a small brochure rack placed on the State Park kiosk which was empty all three months that we visited Borrego Springs. This would be an ideal place for the Activities Guide, once it's developed, unless State Parks has a use for the holder. This kiosk would also provide an excellent location for a covered brochure holder for the annual park tabloid.



Recommendation #85:

Throughout the State Park headquarters area, we noticed a lack of shoulder-season maintenance. This sign is one of many items that needed attention, in this case to remove bird droppings which make the sign almost impossible to read. We recommend that park staff also cater to visitors who do visit during the summer months. We encountered dozens of visitors every day we were in the area in July and August.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Location: State Park Visitors Center

Recommendation #86:

The display board at the Visitors Center should be nearly three times larger than the one shown, and should include information for self-guided tours of the immediate park area, and seasonal information, maps, etc. It should also provide information and directions to the Borrego Desert Nature Center and other local services, attractions and amenities such as the Chamber's Visitor Information Center.



Recommendation #87:

The podium, shown below, should be replaced with a real display/brochure rack, mounted on the wall near the display board (above). The display rack should also include space for other brochures and information about the park and the community.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #88:

Directional signs to the amphitheater, trails, and observation deck should be mounted on the Visitors Center or placed on a stand-alone sign in this approximate location.



Recommendation #89:

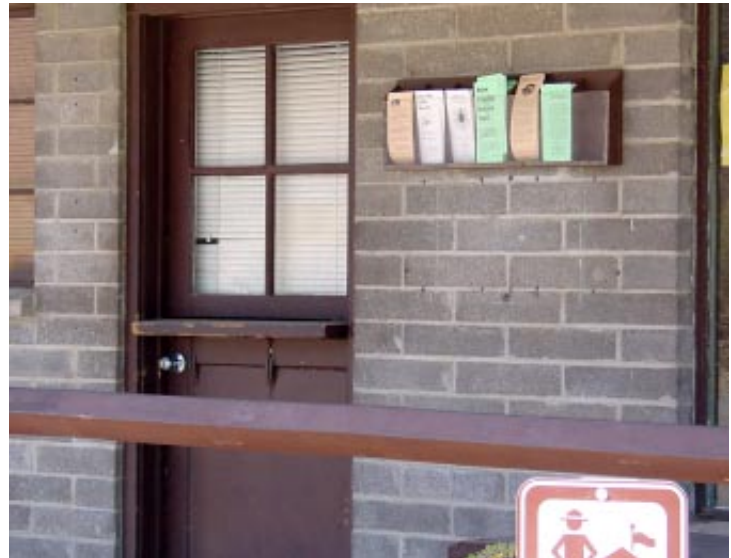
This bulletin board (located at the campground check-in station) needs to be upgraded and the brochure holder should be filled. It's been empty all summer - even though visitors are still frequenting the park. The only place we found the State Park tabloid was at the chamber office.



Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #90:

The brochure holder shown here at the campground ranger station should be expanded to include more park information, the park tabloid publication, local Activities Guide, and other area information.



Recommendation #91:

Location: Palm Canyon Drive from S22 (Montezuma Grade) to Christmas Circle. This sign should be replaced with a community directional sign. Text should read:

- Anza-Borrego Park Visitors Center
- Park headquarters
- Hiking trails - camping
- Hwy. 79 (22 miles)



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #92:

This sign is located on Palm Canyon Drive west of Christmas Circle, and should be removed. Not only is it unsightly, but markets nothing.



Recommendation #93:

The Borrego Valley Inn sign is so far removed from the resort that it was confusing as to whether or not it was associated with the buildings next door. Additionally, because the entrance way was chained closed, we (and other visitors we spoke with) assumed that the resort had gone out of business. The resort and local retailers that are closed seasonally should post signage that states: “Will be open mid-October through May.” The Borrego Valley Inn, looks like a very nice place to stay.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Location: Palm Canyon and Country Club Drive

Recommendation #94:

The Galleria sign should be removed as should the Episcopal Church sign. A community directional sign should be placed here with the following text:

- Community churches (right arrow)
- Town Circle - public restrooms (arrow)
- Visitor Information (arrow)
- [Resort one]
- [Resort two]

With regards to the churches, signage should direct visitors to “community churches” located at Church Road. At the intersection of Church Road and Country Club Drive, a larger sign could be developed that would list the churches around the Church circle, and list other churches not there with arrows directing visitors towards them.



Recommendation #95:

We recommend that The Mall create a lower sign, in an adobe style, just listing key attractions at the mall (Dining, Gifts, Galleries, Clothing, Services). Pedestrian-oriented directories placed in two or three locations around the malls perimeter would guide shoppers to the various shops and services at the mall.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #96:

After spending several days in Borrego Springs, we (and other visitors we spoke with) never knew there was another grocery store in the community. The sign here is very, very poor, is so faded it's nearly impossible to read, and is dated and tacky. As the biggest tenant and the “anchor tenant” to this “mall,” the grocery store should have top billing. This sign needs to be replaced with a single, modern sign that will fit the character of the shopping district.



Recommendation #97:

At first observation, most visitors think the “Center” is simply another strip mall. Yet, it is quite an attractive “Center Square” with a courtyard feel. Thus, it should be renamed “Center Square” or “Courtyard Square” or a name that tells visitors that it is more than a strip mall. The “Courtyard Square” sign should be placed nearer the street without a directory, while the directory (shown in the photo) can remain in this location.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #98:

This particular sign is located along Palm Canyon Drive near Jilberto's Restaurant, and should be removed. Borrego Springs Resort/Estates will have opportunities to be on directional signage in the downtown core area. Directional signs would be placed around the Circle in the major directions. Borrego Estates, as a residential community should not be promoted on the signage - but combined with the resort, would be fine.



Recommendation #99:

While this is not strictly a signage issue, the owner of this store needs to make major improvements to the store's appeal. It is in a prime location, yet the Christmas lights are up in July, the signage is poor, and the architectural style is dated and doesn't fit the character of the community. Additionally, landscape planters along the building would certainly enhance its appeal. Currently it's simply a store sitting on an asphalt lot.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #100:

Because the community will have welcome signs placed on all four entrance roads into the valley, the Welcome to Borrego Springs signs in Christmas Circle will no longer be needed and should be replaced. Eventually, the Circle will include a visitor information kiosk, and informational/directional signage with maps of the community, etc. By removing the welcome signs and adding new signs (which would also welcome visitors), there would not be a net gain of signage within the circle.



Recommendation #101:

Vandalism has claimed the church directional sign seen near the grocery store. This sign and the Episcopal Church sign should be removed and replaced with a simple directional sign that states "Community Churches" with a directional arrow. As stated earlier, a directory sign could be placed at the County Park at Sunset Road listing the churches along Church/Sunset Roads, and directional arrows for the couple of churches located elsewhere in the community.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #102:

The county sign should be replaced with a community directional sign that would list the following items:

- Julian (# miles and arrow)
- Salton Sea (# miles, arrow)
- [La Casa del Zorro]
- [Borrego Springs Resort (or Road Runner Club)]
- Airport

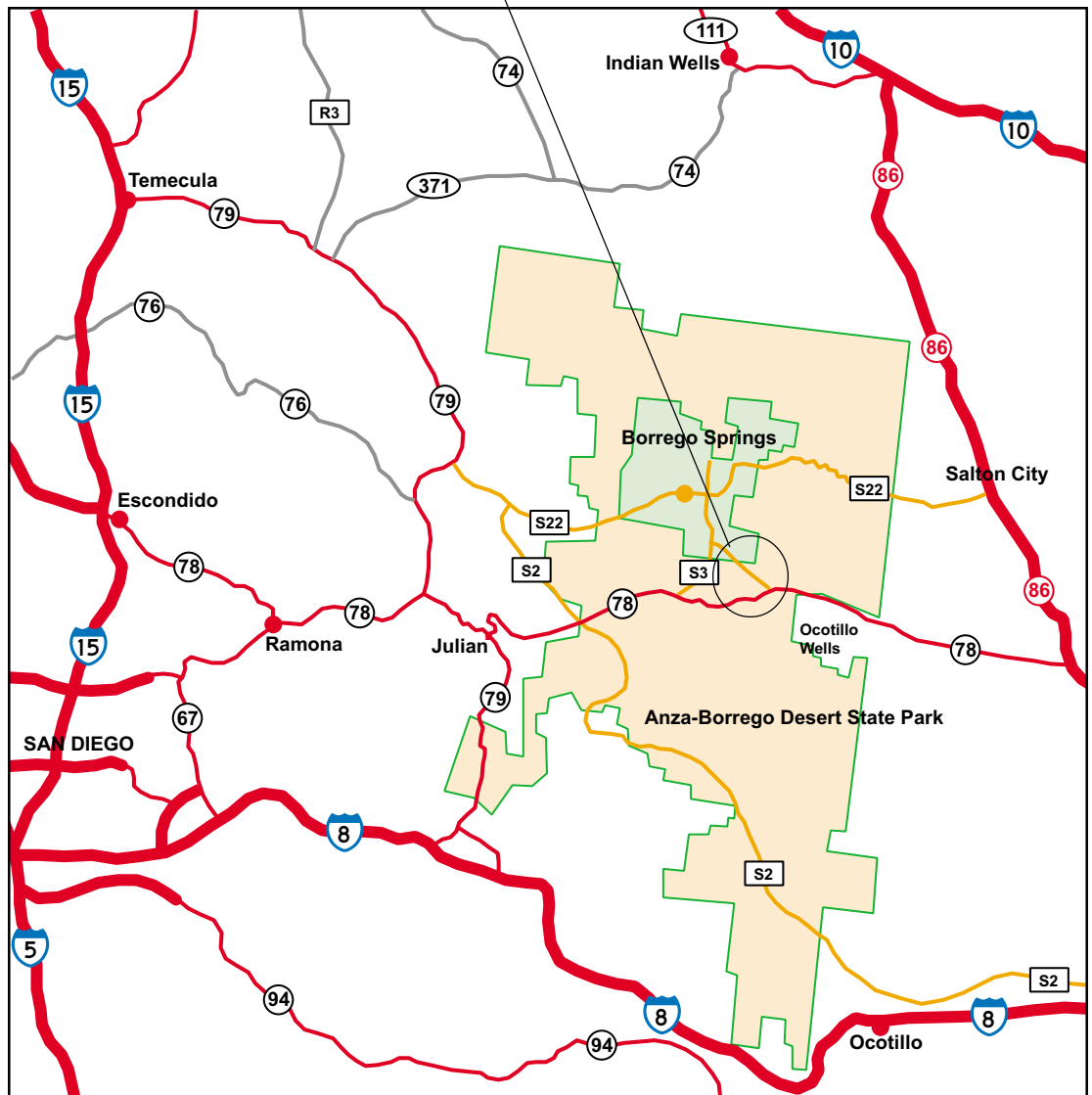
Additionally, the Rams Hill signage pillars should be removed. The S22 and S3 signs would no longer be needed if the symbols were included on the directional sign. If it's necessary that they remain, they should be posted adjacent to the new directional sign.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

These next recommendations take place from Highway 78 to Christmas Circle (Borrego Springs Road), an 11.6 mile stretch.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #103:

It's a shame more signage kiosks along this line are not placed throughout the community! While this is part of the State Park, it does an excellent job of identifying the park, the community of Borrego Springs, major roadways, etc.

Perhaps through a fund-raising program, four or five more of these signs could be placed in Borrego Springs at various locations:

- Christmas Circle
- At the State Park Visitors Center
- Near Fonts Point
- At the Chamber of Commerce
- At a pull-off along S22 (Montezuma Grade)

Once the primary recommendations in this Plan have been fulfilled, perhaps a future TOT request could include the development of additional signage along this line.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #104:

This would be an ideal location for Welcome signage. The location is approximately 1.4 miles from Highway 78 and 500 yards from State Park boundary.



Recommendation #105:

Half a mile toward town from the entrance signage recommendation made above (2.1 miles from Hwy. 78), is an ideal location for a community directional sign that would include distances to key attractions, amenities:

- Visitor information
- Town Circle/Public restrooms
- Lodging - dining - shopping
- Rams Hill Golf & Country Club
- [Resort #2]



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #106:

These three signs are located 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 miles west of 78. All three should be removed. Rams Hill will be noted on the new directional signage. This proliferation of marketing “billboards” is unsightly, and does not fit the ambiance of the community or the Rams Hill development.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #107 & #108:

We recommend the removal of both the Rotary Club sign (will have at Christmas Circle) and the Borrego Springs sign. Population and elevation signage will be available at Christmas Circle. Welcome signage is placed 1.4 miles from Hwy. 78 and this is a duplication of that signage. These two signs are located approximately 5.8 miles from Hwy. 78. A community directional sign should be placed in this approximate location.



Recommendation #109:

The community directional sign (described above) would be placed near this sign, which should be removed. La Casa would be noted on the directional sign, deleting the need for this particular sign. (Located 5.8 miles from Hwy. 78)



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #110:

This is an ideal location for a new community directional sign at the intersection of Borrego Springs Road and Yaqui Pass Road.



Recommendation #111:

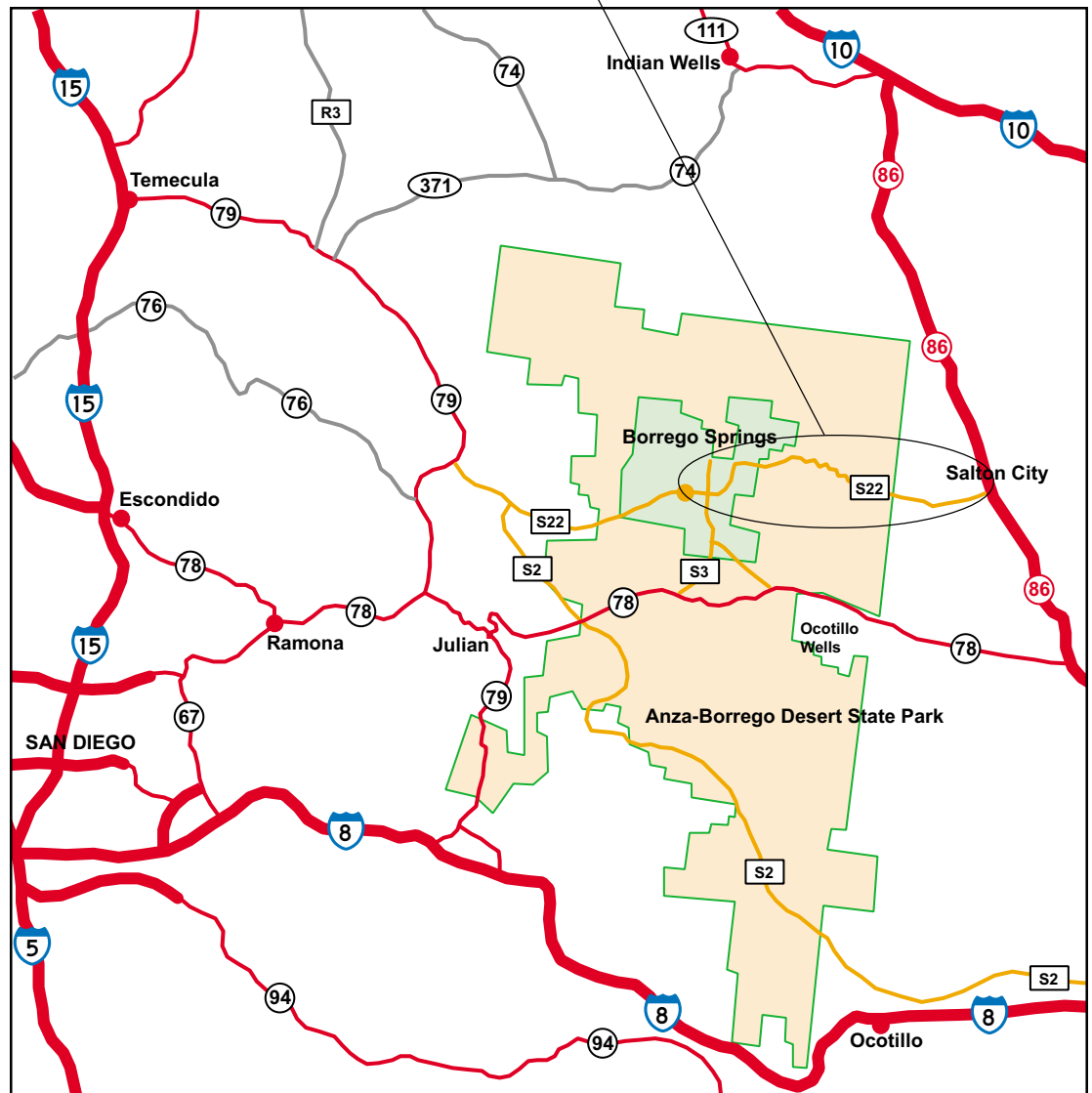
At 6.1 miles from Hwy. 78, the Christmas Circle sign should be removed. This sign is located just west of the Yaqui Pass intersection on Borrego Springs Road. Town Circle would be noted on the directional sign just prior to the intersection.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

From Hwy. 86 (Salton Sea Highway) to Christmas Circle starting at Henderson Canyon Road. This is a very scenic and easy drive to Borrego Springs from the Palm Springs area. As Borrego Springs is better promoted to the visitors and residents of this area, this route will play an increasingly important role. This route is also the means to visiting major park attractions such as Fonts Point.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #112:

The Pegleg Smith and Pegleg's Gold monument is quite a story, worthy of a much improved monument. This would be a perfect location for a community directional sign that includes Pegleg Smith Monument, as well as Borrego Springs amenities. The “monument” is located at the intersection of S22 at Henderson Canyon road.

As a future project, a large interpretive sign telling the story should be erected at this site.



Recommendation #113:

This location, 2.6 miles west of Henderson Canyon Road is an ideal location for Welcome to Borrego Springs signage.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #114:

Approximately 1/2 mile west of the recommended site for welcome signage, is a location ideal for directional signage.



Recommendation #115:

The airport signage should be removed and a new community directional sign be placed in this location. It can list the Crosswinds Restaurant, the airport, and Borrego Springs amenities (with distances).



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #116:

This signage should be replaced with a community directional sign that would include:

- Town Circle (2)
- Julian (28)
- La Casa del Zorro
- Borrego Springs Resort
- Visitor information

The S22 sign would be posted adjacent to the directional sign.



Recommendation #117:

This sign would no longer be needed and should be removed. Population and elevation would be posted at Christmas Circle. This sign is located 5.8 miles west of Henderson Canyon Road along S22.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #118:

At the intersection of Palm Canyon Drive and Borrego Valley Road, there is a collection of signs that are very unsightly, tacky and simply MUST be removed. This collection should be removed immediately. A community directional sign would be placed just east of this intersection, removing the need for these signs. The Christmas Circle sign should also be removed.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #119:

We recommend that Roadrunner Club replace this sign with a nice monument sign like the other resorts in the valley. This sign not only dates the development, but portrays it as second class compared to the others. The entrance, with new signage, could be quite attractive and would certainly help increase sales in the Club.



Recommendation #120:

This particular sign may be the most humorous sign in Borrego Springs. It's quite the driving range! This should be either played up with an interpretive sign and an annual event, or the sign should be removed.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #121:

At the intersection of DiGiorgio Road, is an ideal location for a community directional sign:

- Shopping - dining - lodging (arrow)
- Visitor information - public restrooms
- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Interpretive Center
- [Resort #1]
- [Resort #2]



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #122:

Coming into Christmas Circle from the east, the triangle median should be much better landscaped - after all, this is a first impression of “Town Circle” for visitors coming from the Salton Sea area.



Recommendation #123:

This sign, located on the outside of Christmas Circle, states that the site is the future home of the organization. If the site is the future home of the Anza-Borrego Desert History Museum and Interpretive Center, then that’s what the sign should reflect. Visitors are drawn to attractions (things to see and do) and are not drawn to organizations.

Additionally, this sign’s focus should provide directions to the current Nature Center which is hard to see and is often missed.



Recommendations

Signage and wayfinding

Recommendation #124:

This is an ideal location for a community directional sign that would include the information on the county sign as well as other amenities. The S22 sign would be posted adjacent to the directional sign.



Recommendation #125:

Signage near Town Circle would direct visitors to “Community churches” which would direct them to this location. Here, these signs should be removed (the community park sign is ok) and a new angle sign (L-shaped sign that can be seen from both directions) should list the churches along Church Lane and should also list the other churches not on church lane with arrows.



Recommendations

Signage - Summary

To recap the signage recommendations:

- 1• The existing Borrego Springs Welcome signs & auxiliary signs should be removed as soon as possible. A group of volunteers should be coordinated to do so as soon as possible.
- 2• A nice post should be placed in Christmas Circle (don't use concrete as the post may be moved down the road to another location within the circle) and the auxiliary signs should be mounted to the post. Just below each logo, a small sign could be posted stating meeting hours, days and location.
- 3• A "signage committee" should be developed as part of the Vitalization Group to implement this signage plan. This committee will be charged with hiring professional services as well as recruiting local talent to determine exact locations, exact text per sign (both sides of each sign), and to perform the design and engineering of the directional and welcome signage.
- 4• Once the design and engineering has been completed, the project should be put out to bid so that final costs can be determined. Once costs have been identified, the committee will have a basis to determine participating levels from local businesses for the new signage.
- 5• Once conceptual signs, the text for each, and cost for each "listing" have been preliminarily identified, the Signage Committee will be charged with the "sales" task of garnering commitments from local businesses for the removal of all existing signs, and financial commitment towards the development of the new signage.
- 6• The Committee will then join with the Chamber in requesting TOT matching grant funds for development of the signage program. It will be important to point out to the County Commission that the private businesses will be subsidizing the public signage. More than 70% of the listings on the signs will be public attractions and amenities, while the businesses will be paying 50% of the bill (instead of their 30% portion). They are also paying a major portion of the welcome signage as well (because the cost of each "listing" is divided by the total cost of ALL the signage - not just the directional signage).
- 7• Once the funding and commitments are in place, the Committee will open a trust account and will bill the participating businesses, holding the funds in trust.
- 8• The Committee, working with the county and consultant(s), will obtain the permits for placement of the signs, and will secure a contract with the sign company for construction and installation.

Signage - Summary

These steps should all take place in 2002, with completion of the signage project in 2003. At that time, the committee can look at other signage recommendations including:

- Interpretive signage
- Agricultural tour signage
- Kiosk signage in Christmas Circle
- Church signage (could be paid by the churches collectively)
- State Park interpretive/directional signage (four or five additional kiosks)

9• Immediately upon installation of the new directional and welcome signs, the county should remove its signs per the recommendations, and the committee should begin working with local businesses on the removal of their signs (commitments would have been secured).

10. Finally, the committee would provide input into the new Streetscape Plan (coming up) for the town center corridor.

Signage - Costs and budgets

The initial signage recommendations herein will cost approximately \$185,000 and includes:

• Engineering, design, permitting, etc.	\$35,000
• 29 directional signs at an average cost of \$3,500 each	101,500
• 8 welcome/entrance signs at a cost of \$5,000 each.	40,000
• Contingency fund	<u>8,500</u>

Sub-total: \$185,000

Funding:

• TOT grant request (2002)	\$35,000
• TOT grant request (2003)	<u>\$65,000</u>

Sub-total: \$100,000

• Matching funds from local community \$85,000*

*Plus any cost overruns, improvements, upgrades.

Recommendations

Creating a town center



Every successful visitor-oriented community has a pedestrian-oriented downtown core area. In smaller communities it only needs to be a block or two long - just look at the success of Julian. The streets through the heart of Borrego Springs “town center” are the widest roads within 30 miles of the valley averaging a whopping 80 feet wide. The highways and county roads through the valley average a width of 28’ to 30’ in width.

Additionally, the speed limits along Palm Canyon Drive through town range from 35 to 45 miles an hour - exceptionally fast.

Finally, the look and feel of Christmas Circle is exceptional, while the rest of the town center needs major landscape and curb appeal improvements.

The following recommendations pertain to the “town center” from the Chamber office, west to Ocotillo (just west of the mall).

Creating a town center

Introduction

The number one activity of visitors to any community is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting. The entire benefit of tourism comes when visitors spend money in the community. While many locals may spend their money in neighboring communities, which is often referred to as “leakage,” tourism provides a way to fill that void.

It does not take a great deal of retail or dining to be successful - just look at neighboring Julian. What it does take, however, is a pedestrian friendly atmosphere and setting - both of which Borrego Springs is lacking.

For one, pedestrian friendly cities narrow the traffic lanes, and reduce speed limits. In Borrego Springs, the speed limit around the Circle and along Palm Canyon Drive is 35 to 45 miles an hour, and the roads are nearly three times wider than any other roadways within 70 miles of Christmas Circle (not including Hwy. 86 at Salton Sea). The average county roadway throughout the valley is 30 feet wide (including the shoulders), whereas the streets through the heart of town are nearly 90 feet wide.

The following recommendations are designed to help Borrego Springs develop a “town center” that is small, quaint, attractive, pedestrian friendly, beautiful, and that will ultimately spawn increased retail sales, more small businesses, making Borrego Springs a vibrant community for both its residents and visitors.

For the purpose of this plan, we have identified the downtown core area as the 3/4 mile stretch from the Chamber of Commerce to the gas station just west of The Mall, and including Christmas Circle.

Creating a town center

Recommendation #125: Concentrated effort

We recommend that the Vitalization Group concentrate all of its efforts on the signage recommendations (through a signage committee), and on the downtown core area beautification project.

Rationale:

Working on recommendations for the entire valley is far too big a project for a part-time volunteer committee and so we recommend reducing the focus of the effort to this primary area.

Approximate cost: None

Funding: None required

Responsibility: Borrego Springs Vitalization Group

Creating a town center**Recommendation #126: Develop a streetscape/architectural plan**

We recommend that the Vitalization Group work with the county to apply for CDBG grant funding to develop a Master Plan for the downtown core area. The plan would include many of the recommendations made in this section, but would also include:

- Architectural guidelines and design review guidelines
- Signage height, style and size restrictions
- Streetscape: center landscaped medians, wider sidewalks, landscape buffers, etc.
- Traffic calming
- Cost estimates and phasing for the various projects
- Possible funding sources for construction
- Zoning and land use restrictions
- Common area uses (festivals, markets, etc.)

Rationale:

A Master Plan will be a very important step in the “Vitalization” of Borrego Springs. This will require the services of an experienced planning firm along with a “Master Plan Committee” of the Vitalization Group. The Master Plan will create the “vision” of what the downtown area will be and will allow the public input into putting the “vision” into a document that can be implemented as part of the 2020 plan.

Approximate cost: None

Funding: None required for the actual application of the CDBG grant, approximately \$85,000 to \$125,000 for creation of the streetscape plan.

Responsibility: Borrego Springs Vitalization Group

Creating a town center

Recommendation #127: Develop an architectural theme

The Mall, with its brick facade, looks industrial in nature, somewhat along the lines of a commercial office building. Its appearance is not friendly or particularly attractive. As part of the Master Plan, an architectural theme should be developed for both existing structures as well as for new structures to be built in the future.

The condominiums at the mall are particularly industrial looking and could be easily beautified with an adobe-style finish, landscape enhancements (it's currently almost entirely paved), planters, fountain, etc.



Recommendation #128: Reduce speed limits through town

The speed limits along this stretch of Palm Canyon Drive are exceedingly high and should be reduced immediately to 25 or 30 miles an hour. The speed limit on the east side and around Christmas Circle is 45 and the speed limit on the west side is 35.

While the fast speed limits have not created major safety issues, they do keep visitors from seeing what the community has to offer. The most successful communities keep speed limits through town to 25 - but often, because the streets are narrow, travelers keep their speeds under 25.

Recommendations

Creating a town center

Recommendation #129: Downtown zoning

We recommend that the east side of the Circle along Palm Canyon Drive be zoned general commercial (as it is now) and the west side (including the properties around the Circle) be zoned “Visitor Retail.” Visitor retail would include merchants with less than 5,000 square feet of space (other than the larger ones already existing), and those that appeal to both visitors and residents alike. Visitor Retail businesses would include:

- Galleries
- Antiques
- Video and music stores
- Adventure/camping supplies
- Treats, delis, coffee shops
- Spa services
- Home furnishings
- Collectibles
- Clothing shops
- Gifts
- Restaurants
- Ice cream shops
- Convenience stores
- Jewelry, craft stores

“Neighborhood retail” would include businesses such as hardware stores, auto repair, larger retailers, larger grocers, banks, professional services (accountants, lawyers, etc.), medical and veterinary services, etc., and would be located on the east side of the circle in the general commercial area.

The idea behind this type of zoning, is to help create a “critical mass” of visitor-oriented retail in a concentrated area, which spurs increased retail sales. The mix of business types currently west of Christmas Circle would not need to relocate: this idea is meant for new businesses moving into the area.

Look at towns that are successful and that you think might fit Borrego Springs. What do they offer? How is the business mix? Does the mix encourage you to spend money there? Look at Julian, Angels Camp in Northern California and other small, successful tourism-oriented communities.



Recommendations

Creating a town center

Recommendation #130: Narrow the streets

Palm Canyon Drive through town is 86 feet wide, nearly three times wider than the remainder of the roads in the entire valley (with 55 mile an hour speed limits). At Jilberto's there are not even sidewalks, and most of the sidewalks through this "pedestrian area" are only 4' wide.

The sidewalks should be 12' wide with landscape buffers between them and the street. Next to the landscape buffer should be parallel parking and a bike lane. The lanes should be reduced to no more than 14' wide (they are currently more than 25' wide), and the center turn-lane should be developed as a landscaped median with periodic U-turn or left-turn lanes. These major improvements will slow traffic down, will create a beautiful "small" downtown, will reduce the asphalt and pavement by nearly 35', and will add tremendous color and appeal to what is now wider than most state highways.

The street here is nearly 90' wide, whereas all other roads in the area are 27' wide.



Sidewalks through town are only 4' wide, and should be 12' wide.



Creating a town center

Recommendation #131: Extending the sidewalks

All the white-lined space shown in this photo should be developed to include a 12' sidewalk (currently only 4') and a 4' landscape buffer. Currently, there is 11' feet of space available, before narrowing the street, which also needs to be done.



In the area shown below, there is a 17' wide area which should be developed as follows:

- 4' for additional sidewalk making it 8' to 12' wide
- 13' for landscape buffer
- Angle in parking takes up 20' and should be converted to parallel parking (taking up only 9' of space)



Recommendations

Creating a town center

Recommendation #132: Expand Christmas Circle

The street around Christmas Circle should be reduced to a single 20' lane instead of two 25' lanes. To do so, we recommend that Christmas Circle be extended out by 20' with a 16' sidewalk all the way around the perimeter, and a four foot landscape buffer between it and the street. The sidewalk would provide more space in the circle for art shows, weekend markets, and other events. For art shows, sidewalks are ideal places for artisans in action, for the placement of easels, etc.

The expansion of Christmas Circle makes Borrego Springs' best showcase even more appealing and will encourage increased use without damaging lawn areas.

The street is currently 80' wide here which would be allocated as follows:

- 16' sidewalk or pathway
- 4' landscape buffer
- 10' parallel parking
- 20' traffic lane (to accommodate large vehicles and trucks)
- 10 feet for parallel parking on the outside circle
- 4' landscape buffer on outer circle
- 8' to 12' sidewalks on outer circle areas

This still leaves 12' of unallocated space available for extending the circle even further, or widening the sidewalks, etc.



Creating a town center

Recommendation #133: Create sidewalks, landscape buffers

In this area in front of the mall, sidewalks need to be added, widened, new signage put in place, and landscape buffers put on both sides of the sidewalk.



Recommendation #134: Widen sidewalks, get rid of extra lane

Near the Chamber building, there is a turn-out lane where there is no need. We recommend that sidewalks be created here at 8' to 12' wide with landscape buffers on both sides. This will not require moving the telephone poles, but will require removal of this wasted lane space. The street here is 70' wide and the sidewalk only 4'6". The idea is to encourage pedestrian access from Christmas Circle to the Chamber. The traffic lanes here should be reduced to just 16' wide.



Creating a town center

Recommendation #135: Add 24/7 Visitor Information

The Chamber should develop an exterior display in the covered porch area of the chamber that would include an enclosed bulletin board with listings of local lodging, dining and retail establishments (that are open when posted), and would also include a covered brochure rack. Making the chamber work every day of the year, and every hour of the day will provide the community with a much better return on its investment in the Chamber.



Recommendation # 136: Allow roadside stands around Circle

We recommend that roadside stands (tastefully done) be allowed around Christmas Circle (outer perimeter) with a conditional use permit. This “temporary” use makes use of otherwise unsightly vacant land, and adds vibrancy to the core area of Borrego Springs. The more the merrier during the peak season. In fact, this concept could be turned into a seasonal “Farmers Market” of sorts. The important thing is that each stand be tastefully done and perhaps recommended for approval by the Sponsor Group before receiving the conditional use permit.



Creating a town center

Recommendation #137: Develop landscaped medians

Beginning at the Chamber office and extending $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the service station just west of The Mall, landscaped medians should be developed. The median would have periodic u-turn and left-turn lanes. This will greatly beautify the community, will reduce the ugliness of extraordinarily wide paved streets, and will slow traffic considerably.

The following page shows several ideas for landscaped medians, taken from the communities of Indian Wells, and Rancho Mirage. For Borrego Springs, the medians could be landscaped using native desert materials, in keeping with the natural surroundings of the valley. The medians should be irrigated so that desert blooms can be showcased year round.



Creating a town center



Creating a town center**Recommendation #138: Deed street to the county**

The county recently purchased 16 acres in Borrego Springs for future development of a County Park. Unfortunately, the park is bordered by a private road, Church Lane. Local residents have stated that the county refused to purchase the roadway as part of the land deal unless it was brought up to county code.

We recommend that the land owner (of the roadway) deed the road to the County and that the County accept the deed and develop the road as part of the park project. The road surrounds the park on three sides and is the primary road for the numerous churches opposite the park.

While it's true the county could provide access to the park by creating a roadway through the park, we feel strongly that the county should make this roadway a part of the park project. Of all the roads in the community, this 1/4 mile road serves numerous churches and will serve the public park. It should be a public road. Period. It provides a service to the public more than any other road in the community.

We have seen, on many occasions, local church ministers and volunteers out filling the enormous potholes and patching the road as best they can. The county should apply for federal or state funds for the reconstruction of this road including sidewalks on both sides, bordering the park and the churches.



Creating a town center

Recommendation #139: Landscape the Chamber office

Next to Christmas Circle, the second most important “image” is developed around the Chamber of Commerce’s visitor information center. The building is beautiful, and the landscaping in the rear of the building is attractive, but is sorely lacking in the front. The landscape should look like the area at the State Park Visitors Center with rock outcroppings, numerous plantings - creating a real showcase of what Borrego Springs is famous for: its blooming desert. The landscape should also be irrigated so that desert blooms can be showcased year round.



Recommendations

Implementation



While Borrego Springs has tremendous tourism potential – even on a year round basis – it’s marketing efforts are going to be of critical importance to the success of the community. There needs to be sufficient funding, better partnerships between local non-profit organizations and businesses, and a concentrated effort on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce.

Implementation

Implementation of this plan will take a coordinated effort by both the community and the county. The following are the steps for implementation:

1 • Review and adoption of the plan

The plan should be presented to the county for review and adoption.

Responsibility: County Office of Trade and Business Development.

Timeline: February, 2002

2 • Promotions Committee

The Chamber of Commerce should immediately develop a Promotions Committee and begin implementation of the marketing plan and revisions to the current and upcoming budgets. Much of the initial work can be accomplished prior to the 2002 budget process at the county. This will require a major shift in focus to marketing outside of Borrego Springs and so this will need to include Board and membership approval. This also includes the creation of marketing partnerships with State Parks, the Natural History Association, local resorts, etc.

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: November, 2001

3 • Signage and Master Plan Committees

The Vitalization Committee should develop a Signage Committee and a Master Plan Committee to begin implementation of those elements of this plan. The first items on the agenda would be:

- a. Secure professional/volunteer assistance for signage development
- b. Work with the County to apply for CDBG grant request for a Downtown Master Plan
- c. Develop other resources: Main Street Program, Revitalization grants, etc.

Responsibility: Vitalization Committee

Timeline: August, 2002

4. Church Land deed, 2020 Plan

The County should forward the plan to the folks developing the 2020 plan so it can be incorporated, where appropriate. Additionally, the street owner (Church Lane) should deed the road to the county and improvements planned.

Responsibility: Property owner

Timeline: November, 2001

5. State Parks participation

The Chamber of Commerce should immediately begin working with the State Park, San Diego ConVis and other local destination marketing organizations, to further the promotion of Borrego Springs. The State Park should be strongly encouraged to print and distribute 150,000 park-guide tabloids to State Parks throughout the state, and to neighboring communities including Palm Springs, Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix, Las

Implementation

Vegas, and even Death Valley.

Responsibility: State Park and Chamber of Commerce

Timeline: Beginning in December, 2001 - ongoing

NOTE: We recommend that you use Paul Ford as a resource with the Chamber Marketing/Promotions Committee. He's done a tremendous amount of research into other marketing areas outside of the community that can really assist in putting Borrego Springs on the map.

6• Develop a specific to-do list and assignments

The three committees assigned to these projects should set up a meeting schedule and assignments, with specific deadlines and commitments. A county liaison should be identified and should be brought into the community each month to assist, where possible and when the community is ready. To make things easier for county personnel, we recommend that all three of these committees meet the same day each month.

Responsibility: Chamber of Commerce, Vitalization Committee

Timeline: December, 2001

Implementation - funding

Marketing plan:

- TOT grant requests of \$85,000 plus \$35,000 the first year (2002/2003)
- TOT grant requests of \$85,000 the second year - standard funding with no pre-determined increase (2003/2004)
- The plan also includes funding already generated through Chamber membership and fund raising efforts.

Signage program:

- TOT grant request of \$35,000 the first year (2002/2003)
- TOT grant request of \$65,000 the second year (2003/2004)
- 50% of the project cost to come from local business partnerships. The entire program is \$185,000, plus costs of sign removal and disposal.

Total TOT grant funding request: \$150,000 for two years (an increase of \$65,000 for each of the first two years).

Downtown master plan:

- CDBG grant request of \$125,000 for professional services (project can cost anywhere from \$85,000 to \$125,000 for a project of this size).
- Implementation would require local participation (perhaps a Business Improvement District, donations, in-kind services), and grants (Federal T-21, CDBG, Main Street and other state and federal grants).

Appendix

Supporting documentation



Contents:

- Interviews and input - a list of the people/organizations
- Agricultural input - a letter
- Comments - a letter
- An article regarding downtown traffic corridors
- An article about Death Valley tourism

Supporting documentation - Interviews and input

Interviews and input from the following individuals and organizations:

- Kiwanis Club
- Borrego Springs Realtors
- Scot Fortiner, Citrus Grower (Alegre Farms)
- Lee Bosworth, The Fudge Factory
- Eris Eckhardt, Borrego Home Video
- Jim Hormuth, DeAnza True Value
- Carlie from Carlie's Restaurant
- Jim McCullough, General Manager, La Casa del Zorro
- Brian Cahill, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Tina Townsend, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Jim Dice, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
- Judy Meier, Editor, Borrego Sun
- Tom Weber, Manager, Borrego Springs Water District
- Dave Bresnahan, President, Borrego Holdings, Inc. (Rams Hill)
- Cathryn Taub, Manager, Borrego Springs Medical Clinic
- Dan McManama
- Borrego Vitalization Group
- Borrego Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Jere Hansen, Burnand Foundation
- Paul Ford, Outback Desert Tours
- Father Seraphim, Light of Christ Ministry
- Shanda Hahn, Superintendent, Borrego Springs Unified Schools
- Alex and Nancy Nagy, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church
- Ann Anderson
- Stuart Resor
- John Hogan, Desert Flora, Ellis Farms
- Anne Reidman
- Bill Haneline
- Tina Davis
- Sandy Ford
- Melony Light
- San Diego Film Commission
- Betsy Knaak, Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association
- San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Linda Bell, Center Market
- Belinda McCorkle, San Diego U.S. Export Assistance Center
- State of California Tourism Division
- Frank Riolo, Borrego Springs Bank
- Rick Rabuck, The Rabuck Agency
- Gloria Rosenau, Chamber Director of Tourism

Recommendations

Supporting documentation - Agricultural input

August 12, 2001

I am a farmer who operates a forty acre farm in Borrego Springs, California called Desert Flora and also I am a farm manager for a large wholesale desert tree and palm farm called Ellis Farms. Both of these farms are located one and two miles north of Palm Canyon Drive on Borrego Valley Road. I have lived in Borrego for nine years with my family and my children have gone through the local schools. My wife operates a roadside stand and retail nursery at our farm during the winter when the tourists are here.

Recently you visited our town to evaluate it apparently to develop ways to increase tourism in our valley. I missed your meeting as well as all the other farmers. We wanted to hear you and have input but we all ended up to busy to attend. We talked briefly on the phone in Borrego but did not meet. I also was called by one of your assistants in Oregon and we spoke briefly.

When I came to Borrego nine years ago for the first time, I came in the spring right during the Grapefruit festival and had a good first impression. The climate was great, the desert was beautiful, the people friendly, and I was impressed with the cleanliness of the town and general nice appearance of the residents of the town. I had previously farmed and lived in the Australian outback and Borrego reminded me a lot of their rural towns – nice and clean and clean people. Sure, Borrego is out in the sticks but that gives it charm – the lack of one stop light is a nice touch.

The advantages I see in Borrego are:

1. rural life-style
2. for a desert community, it is one of the few I know of that you can go 1/2 hour and be in pine trees of the mountains and 1 1/2 hours and be on the beach and all the conveniences of large cities.
3. decent schools – not great but at least safe
4. Beautiful desert – especially in fall, winter, spring
5. Surrounded by largest state park in the state to help draw tourism
6. Huge underground aquifer for our water supply
7. Limited restaurants but wide range for a small town
8. Basic businesses in town to supply our local needs
9. Medical clinic
10. Fire station and ambulance
11. Police protection
12. Hotels and motels with amenities for tourists – golf, etc.
13. Airport
14. Roadside stands for tourists to sample our farms produce
15. Large number of churches

Recommendations

Supporting documentation -continued

16. Chamber of Commerce
17. Wealthy locals who support a wide range of community interests with donations far and above most small towns
18. Post Office
19. Bank
20. Library
21. Large number of community organizations
22. Junior College off campus classes
23. Performing arts center
24. Grocery stores
25. Rural buses to take people to coast, etc.
26. Relative lower cost for land and homes
27. No bugs in the winter

Disadvantages are:

1. Miserably hot in the summer with flies, gnats, etc.
2. remote
3. State Park not referring their visitors to other businesses in the valley
4. High cost of necessities in local merchant's stores
5. High school graduates must leave town to get ahead in life.
6. Aerial stunt flyers disrupt quiet of valley when they take over the airport
7. Limited supply of labor in the valley for local businesses
8. Hard on businesses when town practically closes down in the summer
9. Borrego Water District has an agenda to discourage the continuation of agriculture in our valley
10. Borrego Spring Community Sponsor Group also has the same agenda to discourage agriculture in this valley and remove off premise business signs.
11. Limited medical facilities for the elderly. Emergency airlift available but very expensive
12. Environmentalists discourage growth
13. Tourists to the State Park which is very heavy in the winter do not flow through town and back roads to roadside stands to experience the rest of our town.
14. Wildflowers which draw most of our tourists dependent on exact seasonal rainfall so many years there are no flowers and this affects our tourist season.

As far as tourism is concerned, Borrego is heavily dependent on the State Park to draw most of its visitors and this during the fall, winter and spring. Spring tourism is fluctuates depending on how well the wildflowers bloom. Secondary tourism is golfing, resorts, offroading and roadside stands with local agricultural products.

The State Park has well established methods of drawing tourism and it does quite well. The resort advertise and have advertising to help draw their guests for golf and relaxation.

Recommendations

Supporting documentation - continued

In order to assist the rest of secondary tourism such as roadside stands and retail nurseries, there needs to be an awareness to be developed that these existing tourist attractions are needed by the community.

Unfortunately, our own local Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group has taken an active stand to have the county enforce obscure zoning laws to prohibit or have removed off premise signs advertising our roadside stands or nurseries. They took it upon themselves to be the local sign police simply because their members did not like them or want them. They said there are too many signs in Borrego and existing ones do not conform to an ideal that they have as to their design.

For instance, the farm I manage – Ellis Farms had a sign up on private property at the corner of Borrego Valley Road and Palm Canyon Drive for over two decades with no one having any problem with it. The owner of the property authorized us to have it there and we paid yearly dues to some county agency to have the sign there. The Sponsor Group turned our names into the county and the county told the landowner if the signs were not taken down he would get a \$1000 a day fine. After about a month of discussions, I finally was able to keep it up because we have a dormitory on our farm and it was able to be classified as a neighborhood. We then could keep our sign as long as I put under it another sign saying – employee residences as a directional sign to a neighborhood.

I was also in the process of trying to put up a sign for my own farm – Desert Flora on the on the opposite side of the same corner to advertise my roadside stand and retail nursery. I had approval and permit from the county road department. I was told I could not do so as the property was not zoned for off premise signs and practically no other parcel in Borrego was either. I still do not have a sign up and needless to say the lack of a sign severely affects my business.

Our local Sponsor Group does not, in many instances, hold the same views as the rest of the community and in many instances such as the sign issue are counterproductive to the success of our local businesses. To make matters worse, in general, they are anti-agriculture and agriculture has no voice on their committees. We have recently been able to get one agriculture member on the sponsor group as of last week, but he will have limited voice since he is only one.

So, roadside stands and retail nurseries need off premise signs to help promote agri-tourism in this area.

The San Diego County Land Use and Planning coordinator for our area – Aaron Barling had a meeting in Borrego to call on the public to assist them in developing plans for the future of Borrego and their General 2020 plan development. During the meeting, I

Recommendations

Supporting documentation - continued

asked one of the past members of the Sponsor Group what you had to say in your meeting about agri-tourism and during the conversation he said you had told the audience there were too many signs in Borrego. Is this what you said? If not, misinformation regarding signage is being spread in Borrego.

Agriculture started the valley's development, sustained it through hard times and currently is a major player in the valley's economy. Our local Sponsor Group of Borrego Water District have taken an active role to pursue methods to limit or discourage agriculture as it does not fit their agenda for the future. Again, they do not represent the views of the community as a whole, but have a voice with the county officials which could affect agriculture's role in future agri-tourism, if they are successful.

We, the farmers, are opposing their anti-agriculture stance and want to keep our livelihoods alive and well. We are progressive and many of us are interested in pursuing agri-tourism for our valley.

We collectively farm over 4000 acres of some of the most beautiful parts of the valley that have tourist potential. With proper cooperation from the county officials we could capitalize on agri-tourism as one of the few ways to expand the tourist attractions with the minimum outlay of capital investment. In order to do this, the minimum we need is off premise signs. We could also benefit from zoning changes to allow more commercial ventures on our farms such as botanical gardens, overnight camping facilities and bungalows, farm food preparation for visitors, etc. Europe and other countries are much more progressive than the USA in this regard and what limits us from doing this is government regulations and excessive fees in order to do so

There is a big push to develop agri-tourism in California on a state level. We need to capitalize on this and approach the right county officials to expand on this issue. Aaron Barking as mentioned above is one such person as well as Bill Horn Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors.

On one hand we have our sponsor groups and water district trying to portray the farmers as a liability to the community and on the other hand – the farmers are the very ones who have the established facilities to expand agri-tourism and increase the tourist base with limited capital investment compared to whole new tourist pursuits.

Julian, a small town about 30 minutes away from Borrego draws a huge tourist crowd as a historical site and for their apples. They capitalized on their agriculture background successfully and even though few apples are now grown there the urban tourists flock to their town. If we are able to connect with Julian as part of a weekend tour for tourists we can tap part of their large tourist draw. We are so close to such a huge urban population in the San Diego area and we see what tourism can be generated by Julian – closest neighbor.

Supporting documentation - continued

It would be a good idea to call the Borrego Sun newspaper and get at least two years back issues of this local newspaper. By reading all copies you can get a clearer understanding of forces at work in Borrego – the good and the bad.

Supporting documentation - Local input

Tuesday, July 24, 2001

Thanks for coming all the way to Borrego to help us with our tourism. I've been visiting Borrego for 34 years camping and exploring with family on many a vacation. It was close by and very reasonable and fit our budget that was always stretched with 6 children and now 2 more twin boys age 12.

Last year I fulfilled a long ambition of owning a piece of Borrego for a future campground and RV park. We bought 67 acres and found a surprising history with the site. I'm attaching a picture of the most significant structure that is left. An Ethanol "Still". It will be the centerpiece of the campground. Although 4500 people invested their hard earned \$ in this scheme and lost it all... I think many of them would come back to see what's there. You can see this if you go to 2299 Borrego Valley Road and drive in a dirt road to it. I'd be very happy to show you around the site if you want. Once you've seen it you will see it often as you cruise around Borrego.

I've many ideas on how to extend the tourist season in Borrego. This time of year the nights are sublime and if someone has never experienced summer nights in Borrego they are really missing out on a nifty phenomenon! Also this is the perfect time to camp on the desert but spend the days exploring the cooler, shadier mountains which are so rich in history and adventures! My first father in law's grandfather Castanos Paine came out here in 1852 from Maine so the stories go way back with that family. Good luck with your report and findings. Bye for now, Stuart Resor. (760) 753-8022

Supporting documentation - Local input

Thank you for your call and the opportunity to tell you about the plans and activities of the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA).

I appreciate this chance to have input to your report on tourism in Borrego Springs. My main points are listed here:

1. **Dark Night Sky Policy:** One of our most precious resources in Borrego Springs is our dark night sky. The sight of millions of brilliant stars and the unaided view of the Milky Way are a rarity in Southern California today. I am in favor of policies that curtail light pollution and hope that high, bright lights will be kept to a minimum in Borrego.
2. **Connecting Walkways:** Almost every business in Borrego is located on Palm Canyon Drive: from the Chamber of Commerce to the east, to the Kiwanis Club grapefruit stand and the future ABDNHA Desert Museum on the north edge of Christmas Circle, on down our “main” street past the Mall and The Center, to the western terminus of the road at the State Park Visitor Center. Why not make the entire route pedestrian friendly, encouraging people to park in town and to walk. In addition to being great for business, it addresses the reasons many people visit here: wide vistas, open space, clean air, grand mountains views, natural environment, native plants, chance to see wildlife, listen to birds, safe small town atmosphere, friendly people, outdoor exercise often with family of all ages. Many visitors do not have four-wheel-drive vehicles (that give them access to the back country) and would welcome the chance to park and walk after driving two or more hours to get here.
3. **Casting a wider net:** I am in favor of including a broader spectrum of local businesses, nonprofit groups, civic organizations and residents in developing plans, promotional materials, and in working committees related to tourism and economic development in Borrego Springs. The benefits could be more participation, more ideas and a more coordinated, efficient and effective effort.
4. **Sign Policies:** Our organization would like to post signs to our current facility (and in the future to our new facility) along some of the major entrance roads into Borrego Springs and at major intersections, such as Montezuma Grade (S-22) and Palm Canyon Drive. Currently, signs at these important locations advertise a few businesses and/or facilities to the exclusion of the rest.
5. **Dissemination of information:** In order to utilize the information, studies and statistics related to tourism and economic development, such as yours and others’, could be made available upon completion to interested all citizens. One mechanism could be through a notice from the sponsoring organization to our local “Borrego Sun” newspaper about where to request a copy.

Supporting documentation - Local input

I enjoyed talking with you and will mail you a packet with our newsletter, activity schedule and sample of publications by our association. Please contact me if you have questions or want to discuss further. Enjoy that great town of Olympia!

Betsy Knaak
Executive Director

Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA)
& Borrego Desert Nature Center
www.abdnha.org

Supporting documentation - Local input**Interview summary**

Suggestions from a telephone interview with a local Borrego Springs merchant

1. Borrego Springs needs better signage.
2. She would like to see the season extended, but is not sure how to do that.
3. She said Borrego should promote the fact that lodging is less expensive in the summer months than some of the other places in San Diego and it is cheaper to get to Borrego as opposed to other vacation spots, like Hawaii, for example.
4. The community has the State Park, the La Casa del Zorro, two markets, and two restaurants that are open year round. Borrego also has a pharmacy and a liquor store.
5. She noted that people should come for the stars, which are beautiful, the peacefulness of Borrego Springs and that people should take walks through the desert. Borrego has no theatre but many live performances which are excellent.

Results of another interview with a local service-oriented business:

1. Better signage
2. Coordinated open-and-close hours by the merchants.
3. Sponsorship of tours for artists and photographers, stressing scenic beauty and coordination with motels, restaurants and local 4WD volunteers.

Supporting documentation - Local input**Interview: Anza-Borrego Desert History Association**

The Anza-Borrego Desert History Association is a non-profit 501(c)(3) celebrating their 30th year. They have 2,400 member households, 20% in Borrego and 80% in the state, nation and worldwide. The Association currently occupies two buildings, thus the need for a new interpretive center. The Association hosts activities, education, lecturers, classes, tours and publishing. The Nature Center, which now occupies an office on Stirrup, offers classes and retail sales of educational materials, such as books, and is where they publish materials.

What will the new center include?

- Activities, tours, lectures, classes, history and desert education such as, nature, stars, plant life, natural, cultural and historical publishing.
- Publishing facilities: They are publishing a Borrego Desert Series, one issue will be out by Thanksgiving.

How big will it be?

- The center will be built in phases; currently, between the two buildings that they occupy, they are utilizing approximately 3,000 sq. ft. Phase one will conceivably be approximately 3,500 sq. ft.

How much will it cost to build?

- Based on \$100 per sq. ft. it would cost \$300,000 for phase one, which would not include furnishings, landscaping, exhibits etc.

What are the timelines?

- Year one: Nailing down the expectations and budget.
- Year two: Fundraising.
- Year three: Ground breaking.

Have any architectural renderings been done yet?

- They are in the first draft phase, they are unsure of the drawings, they will need to be appropriate to Borrego.

How will it be paid for?

- Member donations and community patrons; the land has been donated but they would like to have more. They have received tremendous donations over the last three years.

Research**Telephone call to San Diego Film Commission 9.27.01**

I spoke with Kimberly Hale at the San Diego Film Commission and asked her for ideas on what Borrego Springs do to help them recruit more filming in the area? She supplied a wealth of information:

Kimberly said the SDFC is constantly pitching film locations in the Borrego Springs area. The Mummy III's camel scene was filmed in Borrego as was an episode of X-Files, who go back to film in Borrego periodically because there is a location there (a school-house?), which, is part of the ongoing story line.

She had many useful suggestions:

- She needs updates for their resource guide
- She needs more listings in the guide
- Basic information i.e., where would film staff go if they had a headache, pharmaceutical access, what if they need something in the middle of the night?
- Updated information from hotels, restaurants etc.
- She needs contact information for her database

Kimberly also said they are in the midst of printing their resource guide and additional input would be valuable. She said listings are free in the guide because SDFC is government funded, so businesses really should list there.

Kimberly would like the Chamber to provide her with photos, background information and things to do while in Borrego Springs. She has some information but some of it is dated.

She said the key to filming is constant communication, a "film friendly" atmosphere and being able to work with the locals, including the State Park Rangers. She said there was an incident while filming Mummy III that almost stopped production and the Governor's office had to be called upon in order to remedy the situation. With better communication the whole incident was worked out and filming was able to proceed.

She said the local community is great to work with but communication is key with the State Park and their environmental concerns.

Filming is very good economically for Borrego and she mentioned something about the TOT incentives, which are waived after 30 days.

Research

Telephone call to Belinda McCorkle of the San Diego U.S. Export Assistance Center.

Belinda is an international trade specialist, and is the team leader specializing in travel and tourism. She primarily assists U.S. companies in exporting their goods and services to foreign countries and tourism is relatively new to the agency. The Export Assistance Center has distribution channels overseas and they plug in promotions via the Internet (buyusa.com) hoping that tour operators will use the site as a resource.

She will be in Borrego Springs on October 11th to discuss their needs at the Chamber Meeting and what the community can do to take advantage of their services.

BuyUsa.com is a portal for tour operators and tourists. The latest news on BuyUsa is that 14,000 buyers have signed up. The site is not yet well known, but includes 1,700 travel and tourism buyers.

us.trade.gov includes online market research, written by overseas posts that we can work together with.

Research**Telephone interview with a local businessman**

This community professional explained that he has lived in Borrego springs since 1972 and has operated several businesses in the area over the years.

1. He thinks industry, outside of tourism, in Borrego would be difficult if not impossible.
2. He also stated that Borrego is an isolated community with groups that don't have common interests, and there is a scarcity of leadership. People tend to move on after about five to seven years.
3. Water is a definite problem, as is unskilled labor and the shortage of housing.
4. The visions for Borrego are high end but the demographics show the median to be lower-income entrepreneurs.
5. The residents and businesses have significant conflict. The residents want services but the money isn't there to provide them. The money has to stay at home: buy tires, groceries, etc, in Borrego Springs in order for the community to become successful.
6. As for tourism, the season is January through March, with a shoulder season of April through May. San Diego has very foggy times, why not promote Borrego Springs to San Diego as a place where the sun is shining, and get away from the gray! Promote this to the coastal strip.
7. The biggest problem for tourism is staffing for peak periods, there has to be more money in town to keep skilled staff maintained.
8. The dollars have to be sustained through flat periods.
9. Don't spend money on an inconsistent ad campaign, i.e. five ad spots would not generate a significant return on the ad campaign.
10. Must promote "Buy Borrego."
11. Anza-Borrego Desert should be promoted to Europe, specifically Germany. But if Borrego gets them there, Borrego must be open for business, with skilled labor to make the trip enjoyable; lodging must have air conditioning so the people don't suffer heat exhaustion.

Research**Telephone interview with San Diego North Convention & Visitors Bureau**

I called San Diego North as a visitor and said that I was planning to visit San Diego with my family in the near future; it could be very soon or at least within the year. The woman said they are not “San Diego” they are “San Diego North” and if I wanted San Diego, I had the wrong number. I said ok what could she tell me about San Diego North. She immediately asked for my address and noted that they are non-profit so the information would be sent via bulk mail and that I may receive it in about a month.

I mentioned that we could be coming over to the area right, since the airline rates were so low; was there anything she could tell me now? She then said she was with somebody and would have to call me back.

I was on the phone when she returned my call, so I returned hers and she was unavailable. I then told the person I was speaking with, my plans and asked if she would provide me with some information. She referred me to the website, which I said I would certainly check that out as well, but I preferred to have a real persons point of view on some of the highlights of San Diego North.

She suggested the wild animal park, the beaches, the historical museum in Escondido, the Mission San Luis Rey (?), and the Casinos and then in the North County Borrego Desert for its beautiful wildflowers blooming in March and April. She also suggested Julian for gold mining, antiques, the apple festival, horse drawn buggies, etc. Carlsbad fields were also mentioned.

The good news: Both the website and personnel do refer visitors to Anza-Borrego State Park/Borrego Springs which is a good start. Much more needs to be done, however to get local tourism agencies to promote more than just the spring flowers.

Supporting documentation - Traffic through the downtown core area

While most highway engineers figure out how to speed up traffic, some work equally hard to slow it down. “Speeding cars can literally make town centers unlivable,” says Stephen Davies, vice president of the New York City-based Project for Public Spaces.

Using a new concept called traffic calming, engineers have learned how to create a more even, continuous flow of autos through a village. The idea first appeared in Holland in the late 1960s when urban planners began searching for ways to make streets safer for children. In Denmark engineers hit on the solution: Major roads were allowed to run wide and straight between towns, but upon reaching a town center, the roadway was narrowed, center medians were added, and sidewalks were widened-which forced drivers to slow down.

The benefits of traffic calming can be dramatic. In the early 1990s, Lake Worth, Florida, had more in common with a ghost town than with its trendy neighbor West Palm Beach. The problem was bad traffic flow. Traveling down the pair of three-lane roadways that served as the town’s main drags, drivers routinely ignored the 25-mile per hour speed limit and raced through at 50. Narrow sidewalks made walking perilous, and the number of boarded-up businesses were proof that few people wanted to stop and shop. “Our approach had always been to build wider, faster roads to serve the drivers,” says Rick Chesser, a Florida Department of Transportation official.

To solve the problem, planners reduced roadways by one lane each, making extra space available for parking and wider sidewalks. After the work was completed in 1998, accidents decreased by almost 50 percent. An unexpected plus was an instant economic boom as new shops and outdoor cafés opened to take advantage of the pedestrian-friendly sidewalks. Says Ewing: “Low-tech solutions have helped create what high-tech solutions so far have not: a way for cars and pedestrians to peacefully coexist.”

An excerpt from: **Calming The Traffic Beast**, How Cars and Pedestrians Can Live Together In Peace. By, Curtis Rist.v

Supporting documentation - Marketing: Death Valley example

DEATH VALLEY – The heat travels from the desert floor in thick, undulating waves that hit your eyes and nose and ears like an oven blast, over and over, all day long.

It is heat that the residents of Death Valley – about 500 of them in an area the size of Connecticut – defer to in high summer, dodging its temper in air-conditioned trailers and airy cotton clothes. An it is the same heat that the tourists with bare shoulders and Bermuda shorts come her to defy, the way some people climb a mountain because it is there.

Each year, more of them arrive. As an excuse, they mention the Gold Rush history and the borax mines. They also mention the sights – like Badwater, the lowest spot in the Western Hemisphere at 282 feet below sea level, or Dante’s View, with 360-degree views of the valley’s rainbow-colored rock mountains and salt basins. But the first thing most people want to see in the hottest spot in North America is the thermometer.

“In winter,” said Chuck Clark, who drives a van to help visitors get around at the Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch Resort, “the weather is just perfect – 90 degrees in the day, 70 degrees at night. The summer? Well, it’s not for everybody, I can tell you that. It’s hot.”

The other day, the temperature was 105 degrees at 10 a.m., heading to a high of 126. The temperature had been much the same for a week and promised to remain that way for a week more. This was peak summer tourist weather. The Badwater Ultramarathon had brought 72 athletes here for a brutal 135-mile run through the desert, and the inn and resort, which look like palm-covered mirages in the desert, were hopping.

Long lines wound around the breakfast buffet at the ranch’s steakhouse. Two busloads of French and German tourists crowded the visitor center down the road. Families spread maps over the hoods of their white rental cars. And two boys, each about 10-years-old, tried to fry an egg in the parking lot.

The ranch, run privately by Amfac Parks and Resorts, is set up like a pioneer village, including a general store, saloon and restaurant.

Summer was once the slow season. Most of the park’s campgrounds closed, the backpackers headed to cooler vistas and the curiosity seekers from Las Vegas, about 150 miles away, stayed put in the relative cool of the metropolis. Local residents then, most of them employees of the federal government or the Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch Resort, would have the sand dunes, starry nights and open roads to themselves. Then about 10 years ago, Europeans began flocking here in the summer.

Now, even the Furnace Creek ranch golf course (billed as the “lowest golf course in the world” at 214 feet below sea level) is booked full. Guests try to outsmart the sun, sneak-

Supporting documentation - continued

ing onto the green at dawn when the temperature is in the 90s.

At Badwater, the most popular spot in Death Valley, tourists were walking on the desert flats, sweating buckets as they posed by the sign that said, “Badwater, 282 feet/66 meters below sea level.”

An excerpt from: Furnace heat draws tourists to Death Valley, But visitors also enjoy the rugged scenery. By Evelyn Nieves, New York Times. August 19, 2001

Recommendations

Supporting documentation - CalTrans letter regarding freeway signage

State of California-Business, Transportation and Housing Agency
Gray Davis, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DISTRICT 8, (M-716)
464 WEST 4TH STREET, 6TH FLOOR
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400
PHONE (909) 383-4226
Fax: (909) 383-6145

AUGUST 7, 2001

08-RIV-86S-Southbound (Junction I-10 & SR-86S)

Mr. David Leibert, President
Borrego Springs
Chamber of Commerce
786 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004-0420

Dear Mr. Leibert:

This is in response to your letter requesting destination signing on Interstate 10 to Borrego Springs via the 86S expressway.

Typically, destination signing is used to direct motorists to major destinations that are contiguous to the State highway. Those cities for southbound State Route 86S from Interstate 10 are Brawley and El Centro. Mileage and distance signs are also typically placed for destinations that are adjoining or adjacent to the State highway. Whereas, Borrego Springs is not contiguous (or connected) to State Route 86S via I-10. Therefore signing is not appropriate on Interstate 10 for this community via SR-86S.

We appreciate your concern for issues that involve State highways. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (909) 383-4226 or George O'Neil of my staff at (909) 383-4558.

Very truly yours,
John Pagano
Chief, Highway Operations
Surveillance Region A

C: Caltrans District 11, Operations

Supporting documentation - Tourism development ideas to consider

EXCERPT FROM LETTER TO THE SANDIN PARTNERSHIP 6.21.01

Here's some of the development ideas that might happen in our East Borrego Valley area if there is interest, attention and cooperation:

1. Addition of an airport crosswind runway new permanent terminal, a small aviation museum and exhibit of antique and historic planes.
2. A small community "College of the Desert" specializing in courses and degrees in desert architecture and agriculture, water conservation, alternative (solar/wind) energy resources, geology, paleontology, seismology, arts and crafts, and astronomy studies.
3. I'm in contact with Art Risser at the San Diego Zoological Society about building a "Desert Wildlife Rescue and Breeding Center". Right now the Mountain Lions are put to sleep when they cause trouble. A breeding program for the Bighorn Sheep is overdue.
4. A small water theme park with room for expansion, with a wave or splash pool would be much appreciated by the kids!
5. A low key, low lighted sports theme park, with play fields would get county funding.
6. A many acre Anza historic trail and Native American village enhancement would link itself thru all the private properties which could contain: trails, desert gardens, refuge for desert plants otherwise threatened, nursery operations, selling cacti world wide i.e. www.cacti.com would be very profitable eventually.
7. The George Jefferson "Paleontology Exhibit Area", a fossil discovery display and information center. How cool will a full size four tusk mammoth exhibit be!
8. Reasonably scaled, low key architectural designed resort, spa and wellness and longevity retirement centers. There's room for a few of these, they could tie into the:
9. Desert Adventure and Discovery/Outfitter center. A few of these businesses are doing well in season. The "X-Files" with their help has filmed some great scenes in Borrego, we've got what Hollywood wants!
10. Desert Theme Memorial Park/Cemetery and Theological Center. People love the desert for its quiet and inspiration and solitude. It's a great place to reflect on life's mystery and for self discovery.
11. A small mini mall/commerce center, visitor oriented.

Supporting documentation - continued

12. Housing, some estates, some middle income vacation or permanent homes. As architects get better at building them ... lovely desert vacation homes are sought out by a small but growing population.
13. A small tucked away outdoor amphitheater for sunset musical or performing arts production would be neat!
14. Low key manufacturing storage and industrial uses already exist. Let's build some better facilities, to help clean up some sites. There's been a tendency to abandon junk, vehicles, etc. These should have palm lined streets, etc.
15. A small office park with desert colors and a theme would be needed over time. You can expect State Park related tenants. Again this needs to be well designed, shady and inspiring.
16. Camping RV parks, RV storage. These uses will love the valley's visitor makeup/profile. We have many thousands of vacationers from all over the world who seek out their own desert adventure, and spend freely while have fun in our area. Let's build slowly over time a carefully planned alternative to the dark casino, prostitute, tobacco, booze gambling facilities, so popular now, we'll show em! Right?
17. Limited agriculture. We've got the perfect environment for citrus, dates, table grapes, and believe it or not: potatoes! A date grove and RV park are not incompatible.
18. There's a great off road area at Ocotillo Wells (nearby). I'm hoping to use my position as President and Founder of the "Toyota Owners and Restorers Club" to get Toyota to consider building a desert test facility ad race track there.
19. A future town hall site with planning and council chambers, offices, and parking, set around a desert theme park with room for expansion. It, like everything else should be low, low profile, low lighting, low noise, and low key.

Stuart Resor, Architect

Pushing a Car

Have you ever had to push a car? Using your back and your legs and every ounce of strength you can summon, you gasp and strain and make faces as the doubt flickers through your mind: “I’m not sure I can do this.” Then the car moves its first inch and you find strength you never knew you had. The second inch is slightly easier, but now you’re thinking, “I’m not sure I can last.” By the time you’ve moved it a yard, all doubts have fled. “Of course I can do this. I can do anything.” Soon you’re pushing just hard enough to keep the car rolling as you trot along behind it, basking in the applause of an imaginary crowd.

Launching a marketing effort is exactly like pushing a car.

I believe there are laws of the universe that cannot be cheated and that these laws apply in every area of our lives. One of these is the law of inertia. My dictionary defines inertia as “the tendency of all objects and matter in the universe to stay still if still, or, if moving, to go on moving in the same direction.”

Your car doesn’t begin to roll the moment you begin to push, and it doesn’t stop rolling the moment you quit. The inertia that is your enemy at first becomes your ally in the end. Momentum is a wonderful thing, isn’t it? But it never comes cheaply.

Likewise, marketing doesn’t begin to work as quickly as you would like, but it also doesn’t quit working until long after it has been abandoned. (Assuming, of course, that you ever got it rolling at all.)

So where are you now? Are you trotting along behind the car, providing the nudge it needs to keep rolling, or are you still pushing with all your strength in an attempt to pick up speed?

If ever you find yourself straining and doubting, call a sales professional. They’re out there waiting for the chance to help you push that car.

Reprint from The Wizard of Ads, by Roy H. Williams

CB&D
CHANDLER, BROOKS
& DONAHOE, INC.